



**Special Features This Issue**  
"Small Boat Building... An Avocation",  
"Tips from an N.A.'s Notebook",  
"Pedal Power",

# messing about in **BOATS**

Volume 25 –Number 13

November 15, 2007



# messing about in **BOATS**

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Editor and Publisher is Bob Hicks

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For circulation or production inquiries  
or problems, contact:

**Roberta Freeman at**  
**officesupport@comcast.net**

## In This Issue...

- 2 Commentary
- 3 From the Journals of Constant Waterman
- 4 You write to us about...
- 5 Queen Mabs Gather at MIT
- 6 Dick Wheeler's Aukathon
- 7 The Great Auk Arrives
- 8 A Winter in Florida – Part 1
- 10 Ranger Loon
- 11 Hooked
- 12 *Jennifer K* and the Mosquito Island
- 13 The Race Around Bassett's Island
- 14 Retirement Party Guidelines
- 15 A Salty Motor Sailer
- 15 Radio Woes
- 16 Small Boat Building... An Avocation
- 18 The 28' Cutter *Fore An' Aft*
- 20 Tips from an N.A.'s Notebook
- 23 Bolger on Design
- 26 Pedal Power
- 28 Book Review
- 29 When Should You Junk a Boat
- 30 From the Lee Rail
- 31 Trade Directory
- 37 Classified Marketplace
- 39 Shiver Me Timbers

# Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor



It's mid-October as I write this, a month before you get to read it. While I really like the fall climate of cooler days and less humidity before the bone chill that arrives during November, I also begin to contemplate the winter ahead with mixed feelings. Once winter is settled in and fall's transition is past I enjoy indoor time in the shop. But winter's imminence looming ahead in October spurs me to get out there on whatever outdoor activities I have yet to undertake, after all, throughout the summer it seemed I always had plenty of time for them "later on." Oh how I let too many golden days from May to October slip by, allowing other more mundane chores to occupy them.

So I have been busier than usual getting in a last few outings. One of them you can read about in this issue, my tryout of the pedal-powered Hobie kayak. If we get another mild sunny day I'll have a go at Hobie's sailing trimaran kayak with auxiliary pedal power. The Hobie is a wet boat (sit-on-top) so I'm not wild about doing this after the cold air arrives. If it happens I'll let you know my impressions.

Jane and I just got back from the 1,000-mile round trip to attend the Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival at St Michael's, Maryland, on October 6-7 (plus two 10-hour driving days) and this will be the main feature in our December 1 issue.

On October 11 I went sailing with Fred Shell in his Crab Claw Cat on Rhode Island's Narragansett Bay, you'll read about that in the December 1 issue. This afternoon (October 13) I go over to nearby Essex to take in a gathering of steam enthusiasts, including several steamboats on the Essex River. On October 21 I will indulge in a novel "ferryboat" experience, providing passage with a borrowed dinghy across a wide washout on an old railway bed near here that is to become a rail trail. Proponents of the project are walking the trail stretch through my town and had no way to get across the 30' or so wide, 3' or so deep swampy flooding from nearby beavers, so they asked this "boat guy" if he could help out.

All this is in the line of work, but added on will be the last gasps of my motorcycling (when it gets below 40° we give it up, wind chill gets kinda extreme). Bicycling

can continue on cold but clear days but my weekly 6am local 12-mile road ride sprint with my fitness fanatic niece has succumbed to onrushing early morning darkness. Maybe after standard time has returned we'll get in a few more?

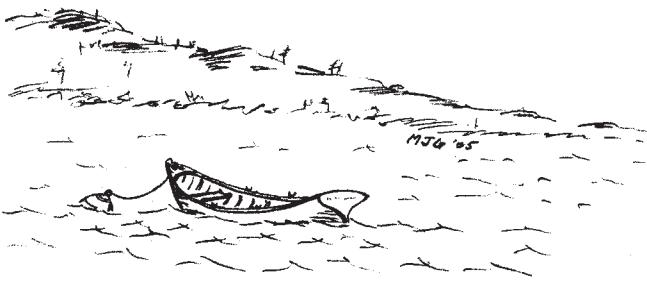
There may be a few more last minute outings ahead before Thanksgiving, but usually around November 1 I set about getting the old place ready for winter, closing in the summer patio (one end of a 45' "carriage shed" between our house and barn) for winter storage of summer outdoor stuff, doing all the storm window stuff on the house, cleaning up the remains of the vegetable garden (so many rotten tomatoes!), raking (blowing) endless accumulations of leaves that blow across the street in our prevailing northwest winds from our neighbor's oak trees. And so on. The usual chores many of us have to carry out.

But winter will soon bring all this to a close. With the arrival of every winter I envision once again doing something out of doors in reasonable winter weather and iceboating has been the boat-related activity that appealed. I have a rather heavy, old, small iceboat (no DNs for me, I'm talking about small, slow iceboating, something I can handle!) given to me by a reader a few years ago but I've yet to assemble it and take it over to nearby Chebacco Lake. This past winter we had no safe ice at all in our metro Boston area, we'll see what global warming does this year.

And in the shop? Well, once again I contemplate finishing off my trimaran conversion for my 21' Tango sea kayak. I have all the parts, amas and windsurfer sail rig, need only to fabricate the mounting hardware to attach the akas and leeboard to the hull. With Jane no longer using her 15'x30' greenhouse attached to the south side of our barn, opening right into my shop, maybe I'll do it this winter. It gets up to 80° in there on sunny winter days. After our little downwind sailing attempts this past summer in our two small solo kayaks, Charlie and I might be ready for something that would really sail. Perhaps this will be incentive enough to finish off yet another unfinished project. And, there are more!

## On the Cover...

Last winter reader Bob Slimak fled the Minnesota winter and indulged in cruising Florida's protected waters in his Bolger Bantam. He begins his tale of escape in this issue.



By Matthew Goldman

## From the Journals of Constant Waterman

The largest turtle I ever saw was while paddling in the Adirondacks, probably in Schroon Lake. I belonged to the outing club in college and the Adirondacks were our playground. We climbed Mount Marcy, hiked the woods, and paddled on Lake George and the numerous brooks and lakes around northeastern New York. The only boats we had were 17' aluminum canoes. They can be noisy if you allow the paddle to strike the gunwale, and they certainly transmit the cold, but they weigh only 75 pounds. Two of us could easily carry the boat as well as light packs. We took only overnight or weekend trips so we didn't carry much gear. Our tent was the bulkiest item by far. Sleeping bags, life vests, clothes, food, and a bow saw made up the remainder. Most of our jaunts traversed still water. By the time spring freshets arrived everyone needed to prepare for final exams. Still we managed to have a good time.

This turtle basked on a muddy bank perhaps a yard from the water. I wish I could remember more details but the decades have a way of clouding the brightest beams. I'm sure she had a smooth shell. This would make her an Eastern Softshell. The females grow to be as large as snappers although their heads are much different, being long and narrow rather than globular. Both books I've consulted give the maximum size of Eastern Softshells as 17 inches. This is the length of the carapace, the upper shell. Snappers attain 18 inches. This turtle seemed huge. As I recollect her carapace looked nearly two feet long. I wish I'd had a tape measure with me that day.

My partner and I stopped paddling and glided alongside the bank. As soon as we drew alongside I shoved my paddle beneath her, thinking to flip her over. I might just as well have tried to flip over my truck. The next moment she lunged for the water and disappeared. She obviously had no intentions of setting any new records.

The snapper I found in my mother's garden had a carapace of 15 or 16 inches. She [not my mother] intended to make her slow way down to our pond. Where she came from I can only surmise. Our little brook connects to the river by way of a larger stream but I've never seen any turtles in it. The river wends a mile away and our house is 150' above sea level. Why should a turtle leave the river, which houses numerous snappers, to spend days dragging herself uphill in hopes of finding a pond? A pond too small to support a brood of large turtles.

My father most certainly did not want this beast in his pond, killing the fish and ducks and endangering his grandchildren. He called me up at my machine shop in the barn next door. I had a client with me. He brightened at the prospect of something different to start his day. I rummaged in the barn and found a large canvas sack. "I have to cross the bridge on my way to work," he said. "I'll drive down to the tour boat landing and dump her in the river."

The turtle napped peacefully amid the daffodils. Perhaps she dreamed of laying a clutch of eggs. She didn't appear the least alarmed when we interrupted her nap. Not to begin with. "You hold the sack," I directed my friend. "I'll insert the turtle." Try it some time. Hoist a 25lb snapper, preferably by the back edge of her shell, and see what happens. Remember to keep her away from your body. Not only can a snapper bite, her formidable claws can make you the envy of every zebra in town.

For some reason this turtle had little interest in exploring our lovely sack. She spread her legs, extended her neck, and fought with perseverance. Isn't that always the way of it? Whenever you try to liberate anyone they fight you, beak and claws. Just as I thought my arm would give out we managed to convince her. Off she went to the river where turtles belong and the world was safe for democracy once again.

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# You write to us about...

(Reprinted from *Fore An' Aft*,  
May 15, 1927)

80 years ago when naval architect William Atkin launched a boating magazine aimed at the "everyman" interested in boating, his early readers wrote him supportively as follows, not unlike many of you have done for us over our 25 years. The enthusiasm of the messages is the same but the phraseology of that time is different enough to make for entertaining reading today.

Dear Mr. Atkin:

Congratulations on the March issue of *Fore An' Aft*. It is, to me, chock-a-block with good meaty stuff and, wonder of wonders, all of it is well written. More power to your apparently determined effort to keep from drooling all over your advertisers in type where the rest of us will have to see it. As a newspaper man earning his living on a sheet that, along with some ten thousand other sheets, does exactly that thing to make lots of money, *Fore An' Aft* seems as Galahad out on a quest for the Grail.

C.A.R., New York

Bill Atkin, 1st Mate:

*Fore An' Aft* is the yachting magazine I have been looking for, for years; like it so well I am having the D.Y.C. send you their subscription so all of our sailors can enjoy it.

E.R.M., Detroit, Michigan

Gentlemen:

I am pleased to enclose my check for \$4 to cover one year's subscription to *Fore An' Aft*. If possible I should like to have you send me the June, July, and August issues at the present time, my subscription expiring with the issue of next May. I am already the proud possessor of your Vol. No. 1 and should like to complete my file.

Incidentally, I am in the market for an auxiliary sloop for Great Lakes and possibly Atlantic cruising, am primarily interested in comfort and seaworthiness. Have not had any experience with craft of the type of the Friendship sloop (May number, page 40) and able sloop *Great Republic* (May number, page 39). But the type interests me very much and I should like to have a full description of these two boats from you, together with the prices asked by the owners and photographs, if possible. If the boats have been sold I should like descriptions and prices nevertheless, and I should also appreciate your sending me information regarding any other boat of similar type that you may have listed.

D.H., Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Bill:

You sent me a subscription blank but, hang it, I subscribed for the gol darn magazine before it was out and I like it. It is good stuff. And I like your plan, too, of making a yachting magazine for readers rather than for advertisers. Maybe you have a good scheme in that shopping department because if you could give information without any advertising complications it would be of use to us all. For instance, I am trying to find a lit-

tle power dinghy about 12' overall that will make good speed and won't weigh much. In other words, one which I can hoist on my davits without too much muscular exertion.

A.T.V., New York, New York

My Dear Mr. Atkin:

Some time ago I sent you \$1 for some sample copies of *Fore An' Aft*. I think that dollar is about used up and I am, therefore, enclosing a post office order for \$3 to round out the subscription for a year.

I have read your little magazine with much interest and some of these days when I make a trip to New York I am promising myself the pleasure of coming down to call on you.

I am one of the few left of the old sailing ship masters who were in the Cape Horn trade between New York and San Francisco previous to the opening of the canal. During that time I was master of the ships *Cyrus Wakefield* and *Alexander Gibson*. With the former I made the trip from San Francisco to Liverpool and back to San Francisco in eight months and two days, 30 days of which time were spent in Liverpool. This, I believe, is record time for making such a trip with a sailing vessel. I am writing all this in order that you may understand my appreciation of *Fore An' Aft*.

I.N.H., San Francisco, California

My Dear Mr. Atkin:

I have not had time before this to acknowledge the sample copy of *Fore An' Aft* which you sent me some time ago in response to my inquiry, or to tell you what I think of it. I have enjoyed it very much indeed and as long as it stays as good as the first copy, you can always count on me as a subscriber if I can beg, borrow or steal the price of a subscription! I am enclosing my check for \$5, \$4 of which is for a year's subscription, the other for your *Portfolio of Twenty Designs*. I should like very much to have my subscription start with the first number, if possible, and am writing to you personally with the hope that you can arrange this for me. You sent me the first number as a sample, but unfortunately it seems to have met with heavy weather in the mails and arrived here pretty well torn to pieces in spots.

It seems to me that *Fore An' Aft* should be a great success, especially among those who sincerely care for the sea and ships, both little and big, and I expect to look forward to the new number each month with as much pleasure as I now do to others which I have taken for years and years. The other boating magazines do not interest me. I subscribed to one when The Skipper was editor and for some years since, but stopped when it went gasoline and hydroplane crazy for I am not particularly interested in 40-mile-an-hour soap dishes, in power boat racing, or pages and pages of eulogy on Mr. So-and-So's palatial Diesel yacht with her tapestried salon, well stocked "cellar," and period furniture, (made at Niagara Falls). So here's wishing *Fore An' Aft* a long and prosperous voyage!

N.B.T.B., Alexandria, Virginia

My Dear Mr. Atkin:

A good pipe, an unopened copy of *Fore An' Aft*, a quiet evening in prospect, and Spring in the offing! *Fore An' Aft* is getting better all the while. When I first heard of it a year ago I fell for its character in prospect, fell hard, and now would not forego it at any price. Have wanted to write to you a dozen times during the past year and tell you how close to home certain articles struck and how I enjoyed the spirit which they so genuinely portrayed, namely that of the single hander. A class, by the way, of most fortunate beings, may their ranks ever increase. But have restrained the impulse with the thought that this desire was doubtless shared by all *Fore An' Aft* readers and would be indulged with fitting grace by a more talented few. Now, however, grace be hanged. I can hold off no longer and so am using the enclosed subscription renewal as an opportunity to "give vent."

The 28' cruiser *Fore An' Aft* making her debut in the March number is a perfect dream ship. She appeals to the judgement as well as to the imagination. She is chuck full of vision and is a delight to the soul. Paint her blue like the *Great Republic*.

Two years ago, down in Maine, I happened upon a fairly heavy little sloop close to 29' overall which gave me as quick and clean a mental knockout as could ever be devised. I fell so suddenly and thoroughly in love with her that I have never been the same since. On the run to New York with her we poked into many delightful anchorages and met a steady stream of admirers. By the time City Island was reached pride in, and affection for, the little ship had swelled to the limit, I couldn't hold another bubble. And what is more, it has remained so swelled ever since.

In her class, I have never seen her equal. Then along comes your 28' *Fore An' Aft*. And so to show you how I appreciate your cutter I am confessing that my little ship has met, in the making at least, her first real rival. If you ever part with her some lucky, and we hope worthy, cuss is going to be that "Happiest Man."

And finally, granted, that nothing so delights the eye and heart of a single hander as the sight of a little cruiser unless, perhaps it is that rarest of rare sights, a fleet of little ships. Is there no practical plan, therefore, outside of an auxiliary race, whereby a single handed fleet could be assembled, and, be it ever so brief, cruise in company? Why not a *Fore An' Aft* Single Handed Club?

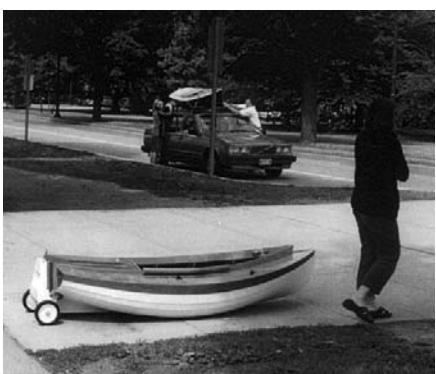
Here's a long splice to you and to your various projects present and future.

C.T., Leonia, New Jersey

**Editor Comments:** Despite this early enthusiastic support for Atkins' concept of a boating magazine for real small boat enthusiasts, *Fore An' Aft* survived for only three years, the last issue published was in April 1929. As this was prior to the great stock market crash in October 1929, the demise of *Fore An' Aft* cannot be ascribed to that overriding economic disaster. Publishing a magazine aimed at a tiny segment of any interest group is an exercise in survival tactics. Without the income from advertising aimed at a large group of readers, and too often the attendant "editorial drooling" over such advertising as mentioned in one of the letters, a magazine's economic survival is iffy and at best a survival level livelihood.



The entire Queen Mab Fleet heading for Cambridge.



Arrival and unloading.



Alex Hadden launching.

Grandson and owner of Queen Mab, Will Hadden, setting forth across the Charles River.



## Queen Mabs Gather at MIT

By John Hadden

On July 7 a fleet of Phil Bolger-designed and owner-built Queen Mabs assembled at the MIT Sailing Pavilion on the Charles River in Cambridge, Massachusetts, under the welcome and inspiring leadership of Karen Seo. It was a memorable occasion as the event was excellently catered for lunch by attendees, beef roast and roast turkey provided by organizer Seo.

The builders/sailors of Queen Mabs who attended were; Al Straus in *Minnie*, John Storror in *Empress*, Phil Dietterich in *Catnip*, the Haddens in *Queen Mab*, Greg Delong in *Just Ducky* (built by Dave Thibedeau), and Karen Seo in *Maltese Cat*. There was a good breeze and so reefing was a welcome and useful precaution. The fleet, with a variety of crews, spent both fore and after noon cruising about the Charles. A "regatta" to be remembered. This was the third of such meetings by the Queen Mab brotherhood. May there be future such enjoyable events. Phil Bolger and his wife Suzanne were unable to attend, which was a disappointment. Besides the builders/owners there were two dozen or more fans/friends/relatives who cheered us on and participated.

Karen Seo in the Maltese Cat.



Group at MIT Boathouse prior to rigging and launching.



Setting up on MIT Float.

Catnip?



In early September Dick Wheeler, educator and environmentalist, considered by those who know him to be New England's "Old Man of the Sea," successfully paddled his kayak from Provincetown, at the tip of Cape Cod, to Gloucester across Massachusetts Bay on behalf of Stellwagen Alive, Friends of Our National Marine Sanctuary. The 76-year-old Wheeler kayaked across the 76 miles of open ocean over three days to bring greater attention to the gem at Boston's doorstep, the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary.

Day One saw a beautiful sunrise as the Dick and his companion set off from Provincetown, Massachusetts. Sightings of birds and marine animals included terns, white-winged scoters, shearwaters which are medium-sized, long-winged seabirds that feed on fish and squid, and mola molas, large ocean sunfish that look like pancakes and are the size of refrigerators. The sighting of a humpback whale breaching about 400 yards from the kayaks southwest of Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary followed. The paddlers headed across Massachusetts Bay towards closest landfall and on to Scituate, passing resident humpback whales on their way.

Day Two was dominated by plenty of boat traffic and strong currents which make Boston Harbor a tricky place for kayaking. "It is like riding a bicycle on the Southeast Expressway at rush hour," said Dick. After

## Dick Wheeler's Aukathon

rounding Hull, Dick had to stay alert while paddling against an outgoing tide. A small cargo ship carrying cars to the Caribbean passed by in President Roads (the main shipping channel). Then Dick had to hustle across the channel in the Narrows between Georges Island and Lovells Island in order to avoid a fast ferry.

Boston's Inner Harbor was even trickier than the Outer Harbor because of the intensity of boat traffic and the waves they generate. In his final approach to the New England Aquarium Dick was buffeted by a 25kt wind gusting around and through Boston's skyscrapers. Captain Dave Silvia, on the support vessel *Easterly*, successfully chaperoned Dick to the Aquarium. Captain John Williamson on the press boat *Seakeeper* brought out a news crew from New England Cable News to capture Dick's final approach.

Day Three began with a following tide and SW wind at 8kts which made for a perfect paddling day. Dick moved along at a fast clip of 4kts. Along the way they passed through several schools of feeding bluefish and were pleasantly surprised to be surrounded by two large rafts of brown Eider ducks (several hundred), each making quite a racket. Calling

loons serenaded the paddlers along the way. Off Baker's Island in Salem Sound Dick startled a sleeping seal on the surface.

Entering Gloucester Harbor proved to be tricky due to the remnants of the outgoing tide and an opposing southwesterly wind which set up some messy wave action. After a rather arduous hour the paddlers still faced one-and-a-half miles yet to go to get to the Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center. Despite these adverse conditions they arrived early at 1:40pm to be greeted by a small group of friends who helped pry Dick and Ben out of their kayaks.

We are grateful to John Williamson, the New England Aquarium, the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies, the National Park Service, and the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society for their enthusiasm, safety boat(s) and staff support for the Aukathon.

To learn more about Stellwagen go to <http://www.stellwagenalive.org>

**Editor Comments:** Dick Wheeler's major effort in drawing attention to the destruction of our ocean resources was a 1,500-mile open ocean solo paddle (without support boats) in 1991 along the rugged coastline from Newfoundland to Cape Cod retracing the annual migratory path of the extinct great auk, a non-flying seabird. We chronicled his progress in *MAIB* at the time and reprint here our coverage of his arrival on Cape Cod as it appeared in our January 1, 1992 issue.

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Dick Wheeler's Great Auk Project's "on the water" portion came to a conclusion on a November Saturday at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy at the western end of the Cape Cod Canal when Dick came ashore for the last time from his heavily loaded sea kayak to conclude a 1,500 mile odyssey that began last July on Funk Island, 35 miles off the northeast coast of Newfoundland. Over these four months Wheeler has endured some demanding conditions at sea and made some enduring personal contacts with hundreds of supportive people ashore along most of his route.

Wheeler's larger purpose was to use this retracing of the migratory route of the extinct flightless sea bird, the great auk, as a metaphor to illustrate his concern over our continued decimation of the world's population of wildlife. To this end he had raised about \$250,000 to fund the trip and its filming for a public TV documentary for national broadcasting. He also had established connections with various environmental groups sharing concern for what we are



## The Great Auk Arrives

doing to our coastal environment, providing these with a dramatic "point man" to gain further public attention.

His "official" arrival at Buzzards Bay was arranged by Mimi McConnell, executive director of the Coalition for Buzzards Bay, and also amongst those greeting him was the director of the Student Ocean Challenge, Mame Reynolds, who had distributed weekly reports from Dick to hundreds of participating schools, and had with her several marvelous scrapbooks compiled of the letters, drawings and reports from participating school children to be presented to Dick. Dick strongly feels it is most effective to educate the young environmentally, much more so than trying to change the entrenched attitudes of the adult population.

Top of page: Journey's end on the beach at Buzzards Bay. Left below: It feels good to be here, Wheeler was in good shape after his four month odyssey. Right below: Dick and his wife Sandra talk to reporters.

Dick's more personal purpose was to continue packing action into a life already overflowing with action, even though he is approaching retirement age. At 62, Wheeler is incredibly fit and when you read the details of some of the situations he had to deal with off the intimidating coast of Newfoundland, alone in his kayak, you realize what he's after for himself. He's intensely aware of his own mortality, and still has adventures he wishes to enjoy before it's all over. Yet he's no daredevil, a favored comment of his about how he makes some of his decisions in the most demanding circumstances is, "I'd rather be a live chicken." Well, he's very much alive, but certainly no chicken by any standard I can visualize.

Later on this winter we plan to bring you an in-depth report on Dick's adventure, focussing of course on its small boat aspects. Dick says he has a publisher for a book, and of course the New Film Company was filming for a public TV program. But these will come later, and in the meantime I think that small boat people will find Dick's detailed discussions of what he experienced fascinating and inspiring. We'll be bringing this to you after we've had a chance to spend some time with Dick learning all about it.

Bob Hicks



Not liking the severe cold of northern Minnesota winters any more, I decided to spend last winter in Florida on my Bolger Bantam, *Drifter*. I had no particular plans on where to cruise except for wanting to cruise Pine Island Sound and the Ten Thousand Islands. Seventeen years ago I took a mid-life break, quit my job, and went cruising on my Bruce Roberts Spray, *Crystal Dawn*, down the rivers from Minnesota to the Gulf, around the GICW, and across to the Bahamas. That's a story from a different time, however. The point is that I missed cruising these areas then as I had to go right on through and up the Caloosahatchee River to escape a late season hurricane. I went on east instead of going back. Now I wanted to see what I had missed.

Arriving in Florida the second week of January I took my time deciding where to launch first by checking out the rivers and coastal areas of the Panhandle. I wanted ideas for cruising in March when it warms up in northern Florida. After I had been there a week a norther came in prompting me to get further south, so I headed for Ft Myers. I launched in a backwater of the Caloosahatchee River near Chester Young's house. Chester was kind enough to allow me to park my van and boat trailer in his side yard while I went off cruising this area of Florida. Thanks, Chester! He owns the Bolger Tennessee *Esther Mae* which has been written up in *MAIB* before.

I had planned on heading downriver to Pine Island Sound right off but the cold front was kicking things up out there so I went upriver instead. The nice thing about *Drifter* is that she needs only 12" to float so I can get into some really nicely protected places to anchor. Not being one to feel I have to move every day, I laid around for a couple of days taking care of some projects around the boat that I didn't have time to do before winter had set in up north, reading, and just enjoying being back living aboard in Florida again.

When that cold front ended and was followed by another one I decided to head on up to LaBelle. I arrived just as two trawlers cleared the bridge from upstream and started docking procedures. I anchored across the way as this could take a bit of time as docking is done Med style here. After they had docked I saw there was one place left on the dock proper but thought that since it was this crowded I would leave it for someone who needed deep water and tied up on the end where it was only about 18" deep. I would

The Free dock at LaBelle.



## A Winter in Florida

By Bob Slimak

### Part 1

have just stayed at anchor except that I needed to get food and ice and use the computer in the library.

LaBelle is still a great, boater friendly place. One can stay at the dock for three days and they even provide water and electricity! Everything needed to provision is within easy walking distance. I had to go get a piece of pie from Flora & Ella's, of course, and found out they had moved from the original place a couple of blocks away and were now a pretty good walk away. Their pies are still great but I liked the atmosphere of the old place better.

Being on the dock also gave me a chance to talk to other boaters, something I miss if I am always anchored in out of the way places in shallow water. This visiting gave me insight into the boating problems in Florida. I'm sure you have all read some of the stories about how marinas are being replaced by condos because of high property taxes. The only way for a marina to survive is by charging really high prices. Talked to Jack, who told me that after living aboard for 13 years at a marina at Anna Maria Island (barrier island off the south end of Tampa Bay) he couldn't afford it any longer and had to go back to living on the hook. According to Jack they were charging \$600 a month for dock space.

Forcing marinas out of business seems short-sighted since Florida gets \$18.4 billion dollars a year from boating. Not to mention more and more of those ugly 50-story condos. To me condos are human-sized beehives and I can't imagine why anyone would want to live in one, or anywhere near one for that matter! We also discussed the recent law passed in Florida regarding anchoring and how many places were ignoring it and still telling anchored boats to leave after 24 to 72 hours, depending on where they were.

Well, with seemingly one cold front after another giving Florida an unusually cold winter I was considering heading east to the Atlantic, then south through the Keys. Determined to see Pine Island Sound and the Ten Thousand Islands, however, I started to slowly head back downriver towards the Gulf. Seventeen years ago most of the loops left from straightening the channel for barge traffic were all wilderness and made great gunk holes for anchoring. Now most of them were filled up with

houses. One can still anchor, of course, but it's not as nice as before. Fortunately places can still be found if one searches them out and if one doesn't have a deep draft boat.

After waiting out a two-day blow anchored back in the Power Plant Slough north of Ft Myers I finally got a promising forecast, more normal for this time of year. I headed downriver again and stopped in at Bimini Basin in Cape Coral, another of the few remaining boater friendly places. Well protected with a city park on which to pull up a dinghy (in my case a solo canoe), everything needed to provision is within easy walking distance, including a West Marine, Ace Hardware, Publix, and many restaurants. A great place to stop for supplies, but no wilderness, just expensive houses on a maze of canals.

When the weather finally broke I went for Pine Island Sound. Since it was a glorious day I just kept going all the way up to Cayo Costa Island and the State Park which comprises 90% of the island. A beautiful place with beautiful beaches. Well, mostly beautiful anyway. Here I came upon another new Florida problem, although I wouldn't read about this until later on down on Sanibel Island. While the beaches were great, to actually go swimming one had to walk through deep piles of red algae or seaweed to get to the water. I later read that this is caused by too much fertilizer runoff from agriculture and is a big problem for the tourist resorts whose clients expect pristine beaches.

There were 27 boats at anchor in the Cayo Costa anchorage one day and I observed some interesting human behavior. While most of the big sailboats had fast outboard powered dinghies, three of the biggest power boats had sailing dinghies. They apparently could not be satisfied in just sailing for the fun of it but set out fenders as markers and proceeded to have a race, complete with air horn signals, thereby ruining the pristine silence of the anchorage. I've never understood why so many people can't seem to find enjoyment in something unless they can beat someone else, thereby proclaiming themselves superior, at least for that day. Ah, the human super ego, the root of most human problems.

Anyway, after determining that I would not be allowed to shoot the damned horn out of his hand, I instead paddled to shore and walked to the other side of the island for the rest of the afternoon. Having satisfied my curiosity on Cayo Costa and realizing I was not going to find any Angel Wing shells there, I upped anchor and headed across the bay to the anchorage on the southeast side of Punta Blanca island. This was the more typical anchorage as I was to find out, meaning there was no place to go ashore, the shoreline being nothing but mangroves. Since there is a nice beach around the corner, however, I de-

Anchorage at Cayo Costa State Park.



cided to go around and beach to take a walk and do some shelling.

Coming around the corner I found a rather large, long-legged feral hog had already staked out the beach. Not being one to argue with something that has bigger teeth than me, I left him his beach and went on down to North Captiva and Foster's Bay. Having read in a previous article in *MAIB* that it is tricky getting in without local knowledge, I went in slowly. I finally realized that some fisherman had set all his/her traps on both sides of the channel and just followed them across the flats and into the anchorage areas. I could see that the hurricane, Charley, I think, had done much damage to the mangroves and had, in fact, cut a new channel through the island. So are charts in the future going to show a South North Captiva and a North Captiva? Will they give it a different name? Hmmm.

After too many boats came into the small anchorage areas, it being a Friday, I left for places with more room to be away from others. Finally I found myself down in the bight between Buck Key and Captiva, as far away as I could get from the other boats. The next day I went paddling around and found that Captiva is not a boater friendly place, not to boaters who anchor anyway. It seems that unless one takes a marina slip or eats at one of the expensive shoreside restaurants there is no welcome here.

I digress again. I have noticed in my travels that people who travel to find out what life is like and how people live in other countries are not really welcome either. On one of my trips to Mexico I was wandering around a local market seeing how vastly different it was from shopping in the US and kept repeating "solo Miranda" to all the shopkeepers trying to sell me everything, for none of which I had any need. As I came up to a woman who spoke English she said, "if you are only looking, what good are you?" Apparently one is expected to buy things one doesn't need just to help the economy. But what to do with all those things?

Hmmm, actually buying things not needed seems to be the American way to

keep the economy going also. Oh well, having too much stuff already, I stopped buying anything on my travels 30 years ago. Lodging, food, and transportation are it. Be that as it may, I found it kind of irksome to find that same attitude here in Florida. Seventeen years ago it was easy to find places to go ashore, in fact, the guidebooks I had then not only told where to anchor, but where on shore to tie up a dingy. I had three Florida cruising guides with me this time and none of them gave any hint of where I could tie up.

So I tied my canoe in an out of the way place by the parking lot of the Green Flash Restaurant, and having paid my dues to the tune of \$25 for a fish sandwich and a beer, plus tip, spent the afternoon wandering around Captiva. While it is definitely touristy and expensive, it is still a pleasant place in that the stores, shops, etc. are small and feel like they belong to an older Florida than all the newer 50-story condo places.

Moving on down the chain to Sanibel I anchored in Tarpon Bay, finding way more water than shown on my chart. I took my canoe and set off to explore. After going through six different bays back into the mangroves, most of them having more than one cut through them, I decided this was not such a good thing to do without either a handheld GPS or a lot of red ribbon to tie onto the mangroves to mark my way back. Since mangroves pretty much look all the same it is hard to get one's bearings without any landmarks. I figured six small bays back was about the limit to my aging memory and paddled back before it got dark.

The next day was rainy and windy so I just stayed put and read. The day after that arose clear and sunny so I upped anchor and followed the channel markers to the other end of the bay and anchored off the Park Concession place where they rent boats, canoes, kayaks, and bikes and have excursion boats to take people out on tours of Tarpon Bay. I paddled ashore and walked into town, looked around, bought supplies, and went back to the boat for the night.

Next day I paddled ashore and rented a bike to explore the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Area. From there to the start of the Wildlife Drive is two miles, then eight miles around the outer loop, than another four around the inner loop, then to the beach, back into town to the Bailey Tract, then around town, bought more supplies and then back to the boat. I pedalled about 20 miles, which was easy by bike but not possible by walking. Although I could rent a bike here it was at this point that I regretted not bringing along my folding bike. Next year! It was a very nice day, seeing many kinds of birds and a few gators, although no really big ones.

When I got back home in the spring I happened to see a special on TV about how Sanibel had decided to get in line with the rest of Florida's populated areas regarding gators and hired hunters to get rid of any over 8'. This was after two people were killed by gators, the last straw being a well-known woman landscaper who was taken 15' feet from shore in 2004. If I had seen the film showing just how fast a big gator can be out of the water with its jaws clamped on a leg, I would have been much more careful than I was, to say the least. It seems a gator can propel itself onshore the length of itself in the blink of an eye. Thus a 15' gator can be onshore 15' before one can react. Later, on the St Johns River, I saw for myself just how fast these ancient creatures can move.

Leaving Sanibel I drifted on down to Estero Island (Ft Myers Beach) and anchored past the mooring fields behind the little island. While passing the mooring fields I saw the *Mark V Heart of Gold* and circled around, but no one was aboard. Then in the anchorage I saw a Bolger sailboat that looked like an AS29. The owner was not onboard but a friend of his onboard said that is was a Bolger 39' but that was all he knew. There was no name on the boat and he didn't know that either. Oh well!

In my quest to stay away from other boats I anchored way over by the shoals. Late in the afternoon a guy swung by in his dinghy and told me I would be grounded at low tide. I decided to stay put as it was all sand and I could see how she takes the ground. I had been having problems with my new Fortress anchor setting. Once set it holds great, but it is so light for the size of its flukes that it sails to the bottom and has trouble setting. In a crowded anchorage I thought grounding during the highest tidal current might not be a bad thing. I did ground and everything was OK.

**(To Be Continued)**

Unknown Bolger 39-footer at Matanzas Pass anchorage in Ft Myers Beach.



Beach at Cayo Costa.

Mark V Heart of Gold at Ft Myers.



There are those animals, you have heard of them, who seem to take care of humans, Lassie-like. The dog that saves a family from a burning house, the dolphin that guides a ship to safe harbor. Maybe your own pet is attuned to your needs and activities, trying to stay near, protect, or gratify. Mine is.

But loons are, as a rule, not at all in that category. Birds of the northern lakes and ocean shore, they call in the night with their haunting tremolo or wail, usually from far away. They move about, always on the sharp lookout, diving and hunting food. You might hear their soft cooing or hooting as they communicate with each other but it will not generally be as close as it sounds for the sound carries for long distances over water.

Loons are reported to be solitary birds, very territorial, with a single mating pair on smaller lakes, although larger lakes may have several pairs. They tend to be alone and apart and they especially avoid human contact. Loons are poor fliers and cannot walk about or stand on land, flopping forward on their breasts as they scoot to the nest. However, they are excellent swimmers. And they are definitely not pet material.

## Ranger Loon

By Hugh Groth

Ranger Loon was different. He apparently lived on Killarney Lake in Ontario's Killarney Provincial Park. He took care of the people who came there. At least he took care of us. It was on one of our many trips to the park, a favorite place for us, where my wife and I pack the canoe with gear and food for several days, then paddle and portage to a remote lake, most often Killarney. This time we had the site we wanted on a rocky point of land with a long view of the white quartzite mountains rising straight out of the water and ringing the lake. The weather was warm and dry. It was late June with long days before dusk set in along with the mosquitoes and the black flies were gone.

The Canadian Shield abounds with rocky places to sit and soak up the views and I seem to be particularly adept at finding just the right spots with backrest and sloped seat, almost like an easy chair if one doesn't mind that it's a bit firm. One such spot on this

campsite was right on the point only a few feet from the water. It was the perfect place to read or paint or just enjoy the solitude.

That first afternoon as I sat on the point a loon popped up out of the water not 10' from me. He sat there in the water for a while as we watched each other, he eyeing me head to toe and me trying hard to be still so he would stay. Then he dove and was gone as quickly as he came. I did not see him come to the surface again. Then a strong wind came up and I retreated up the rocks. We saw no more of loons that day but were treated to a concert of loon calls all night. Killarney is a big lake and clearly there was more than one pair of loons in residence.

In the cool and calm of the morning I decided to resume enjoying the lake from my rocky easy chair. I walked to the point and there, right where I had been sitting, was a small white loon feather. I picked it up and looked out over the lake. There was a loon preening in the morning sun. I watched for a while as he dove and resurfaced several times, then spread and flapped his wings, called, dove, and was gone.

In the evening we headed up the lake in the canoe, enjoying the sunset on the mountains. Down the lake toward us came five loons, one of them clearly in charge and in the lead. They headed straight for us then, as they came close, they changed direction and proceeded to lead us on a tour of the center of the lake. They were not in the least alarmed by our presence, deliberately swimming close to our canoe. They seemed to want to be near us, softly hooting and dipping their heads in the water, so we followed for a little while. What a treat and very uncharacteristic of loons. Of course, there was another concert again that night.

Every morning there was one loon off the point, sometimes well out in the water, sometimes close by, moving around, staying near, watching and checking on us. We would hear them throughout the day and often at night calling from a distance with their yodels and long, mournful wails. We watched them flap their wings and churn the surface as they walked on the water to take flight. They never went far. There was always one, sometimes two or three, somewhere near our campsite.

Then as all things must, our stay came to an end. We packed up and as we loaded the canoe for the long trip back, there was Ranger Loon not far offshore with his mate. We shoved off and the two of them proceeded to follow closely as we traversed the winding channel at the south side of the lake on our way to the portage. We landed and the two loons stopped and watched from about ten yards out in the channel as we pulled the canoe up, shouldered our packs, and headed off down the path. They were still there when we came back for the canoe and the rest of our gear so we stopped and quietly bid them farewell. At that point another couple arrived at this end of the portage and began to ready their canoe and equipment for launching.

I believe that if one is quiet and watchful one can detect a little of what might be defined as emotion in animals and birds. The two loons had watched in stillness as we moved away over the portage and as we said goodbye. Then, as the new couple showed up, they began to dip their heads and hoot. They did not leave but rather seemed ready and eager to care for the next party and show them their lake.

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As I sit here writing this article in February 1995, I am a long way from the sea. Not in a geographic sense, in fact, the Atlantic is only a couple of dozen miles to the east. But in a chronological sense, I have been away from the water a long time, more than five years.

For the first time in a long time I am planning a voyage once again (a single-handed charter in the Keys) and as I do, I wonder how I could ever have stayed away as long as I have. The wonder, the delight, the sheer freedom of being master of my own vessel and its track upon the water, these are things that fill me with the little butterflies of anticipation as well as the pounding wing beats of excitement and adrenaline. My trip is still months away but I think to myself, "It's good to be back."

And it is good to be back, again. This is really my second return to boating. "The water" was the best part of my childhood and growing up. Long before there was a driver's license and the linear freedom of the road and the automobile, there were the omnidirectional options of a boat and the Chesapeake. In those days it was all about gas, oil, and speed. The best days were calm and glassy but the windy, choppy days were only slightly less wonderful. All of Davis Creek was my backyard, the North River my neighborhood, and in fair weather I could venture out for many, many miles on the five rivers of Mobjack Bay and the three counties they touched.

Not that it was all about small power-boats. There were a few sailing adventures in dinghies, Skipjacks, and P-cats. And my cousin's husband Murray, 20 years older than I, would show up once a summer from some far off harbor called Fishing Bay in his 26' Pearson Ariel sloop, then something of a technological marvel made of something called fiberglass.

Our family and Murray's would usually go for a day sail and once I even made the long Sunday trip back to Fishing Bay as a junior crew member along with his wife and two daughters. Most of what I remember of that trip is from a ten-year-old's perspective, sunburn, canned Brunswick stew, and that odd disorientation of being captive in a family system with rules similar to the one at home but at the same time strangely different. Oh yes, and I remember that evening after the long drive back home, the comforting, soothing feel of the shower, the luxury of the sheets, and the way my bed seemed to pitch and roll as I drifted off into a deep slumber.

Sailing did not catch on for me at that time, at that slightly pre-adolescent age powerboats were more in tune with the tempo of my racing heart, ringing ears, and breathless need to keep moving fast. And yet, even as I'm writing this, I wonder if, even then, the sailing bug didn't bite me and then lie dormant over a 12-year gestation.

I left the Chesapeake in the mid '70s to go inland and away to school and it was years before I got back, and this time it was a sailboat that did the deed. Murray's faithful old 26-footer, outboard motor, head-under-the-vee-berths and all, had grown too small. A friend of his had offered him the use of his old Tartan 27 sloop, idle and unloved for many years, for no more cost than it would take to get her up and going again. What better proposition can you make a sailor on a tight budget?

My involvement started innocuously enough, I was brought on as mechanical talent making a late winter trip with Murray

## Hooked

By Preston Larus

down to Fishing Bay to give her ancient inboard engine a look. *Nightingale* was solid and whole, rough, yes... dirty, stuck, and scuzzy, yes... but solid and whole nonetheless. She was hull #67, heavily built long before petroleum shortages made fiberglass resin expensive and boats became eggshell-thin. It would take more than neglect to do her any serious harm as I would find out again and again in the happy years to come. Only a foot longer than the Ariel, she still was a much larger, roomier, heavier boat.

Her Atomic Four inboard was seized with rust but we oiled it, nudged it, pried it, and finally cranked it. I gave her a crude tune-up and she was so grateful for the attention that she forgave us her stuck piston rings and low compression and wheezed on nobly for almost three more full seasons.

My interest in sailing having yet to be awakened, Murray sailed her most of that summer without me, though I came back a few times to minister to the Atomic Four. But in late August I signed on to sail with him and four others to Rockaway Island, New York. I can't say exactly when it was, exactly, that it happened, but at some indefinable point on that journey I became a sailor.

I'm pretty sure it wasn't on the first morning at sea when I awoke hung over somewhere off the Virginia Capes to find that for some reason we were out of sight of land! Well, this was a first. And whether it was the overindulgence, or the anxiety, or the oscillation, no matter, I was promptly, thoroughly, wrenchingly seasick for the first time ever, an experience I have repeated on many "first days out" in the years since. Maybe it's just my way of greeting the sea gods.

*Nightingale* showed me so many firsts on that trip and in the years to come, most of them more pleasant than that first bout of seasickness! I'll never forget the strange loom of the occulting Ambrose Light off New York or the thrill of approaching a strange harbor at night, weary of wave-tossed nights at sea and risking all for a fresh water shower, thence to swing quietly to an anchor in protected waters.

But the signal experience for me was the storm we sailed through on the return trip. With better than 30 knots of wind over the starboard quarter under a double-reefed main and working jib we careened through the night like a runaway train.

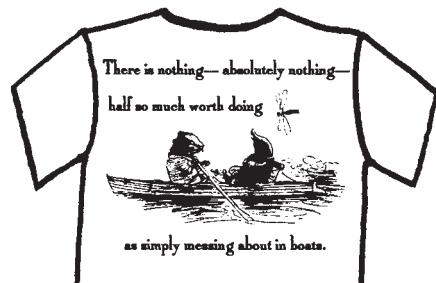
Now that's not much of a gale as sea stories go, I realize, but it was the first time I had ever experienced anything like that and we were at least a hundred miles offshore, no less, in an unproven (to me, at least) vessel. I wondered what in the hell could have ever made me think this sailing was a good idea and I longed for safety like a lost cub for its mother. The tiller required equal measures of concentration, finesse, and plain old muscle and Murray and I took turns on the hour and then on the half-hour all through the night until morning.

Something clicked for me that night. Maybe it was the palpable fear, the challenge of the gale, followed by the dawning knowledge that I was competent, that I could do only my best in the face of a storm of yet-unknown strength and that, for now at least, my best was pretty good, maybe even good enough. It was an odd mix of power and pow-

erlessness, a paradox of my own significance and insignificance whose ultimate lesson I still did not know from moment to moment.

When dawn brought moderating winds and clearing skies I took to a leeward bunk and dozed off, feeling a bizarre state of grace and satisfaction. I had risked and played and worked and learned things I would never forget as long as I lived and been spared to go out and do it again, learn some more, have some more fun.

Yes, Cap'n, I was hooked.



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She was a cute little bug. Born a Compac 16 by the Hutchins Co someplace down in Florida, *Jennifer K* was the only actually new, never been owned by anybody else, not used, in the water for the first time with me, boat that I have ever owned. Well, there was the inflatable named *Muddy Moccasin* that I bought new. And now that I think about it, the little Hobie kayak came with the price tag still on it. But other than those two, *Jennifer K* was my only new "regular" boat. And did I say cute? Yeah, cute.

I bought her on a dealer's lot just down the road from where her namesake, Jennifer, was born. At 16'x6'x1½" and 1,100lbs she wasn't all that big. Rather "New England" in character. Little round ports on the cabin sides and barely room for two coffin berths and not much else inside. I sailed her in the bayous south of New Orleans. I made a couple runs across Lake Pontchartrain. Now that was sort of like being at sea as one can actually get out of sight of land. Granted, it never gets more than about 10' deep. But one can pretend. I have pictures sailing on Pensacola Bay and off the ICW east of Mobile. Later on my friend, Larry, and I plunked her into Lake Tenkiller in Oklahoma and a smaller pothole lake near his hometown, Sallisaw.

About the only time Jennifer actually sailed on "her" boat she was still riding around in an infant carrier car seat. All things being equal she was much better suited for getting into that little cabin. We went down one of the bayous from a launching ramp I had discovered, rather by accident. When I say "ramp" I use the term sort of loosely. More a dirt road that sort of dead ended in the slough. But anyplace that little boat went, especially in the bayou country, people just seemed to come back for a second look.

I recall that outing when Jennifer came along. Her little boat sported a mast of about 18' or so. When one of the meandering bayous narrowed the trees on either side could be multiple times taller. Let me put it this way. Yes, the wind does blow in places like

## *Jennifer K* and the Mosquito Island

By Dan Rogers

that. But folks are just not used to seeing a sailboat wandering amid the cypress and live oak. Several "Cajun Boys" came roaring by in their motorized pirogues, only to U-turn and come back to verify they had just actually passed a small cabin sailboat on "their" personal watery race track. You know, I don't think I ever saw another boat sailing in those places. Wonder if anybody does.

Older daughter, Elisa, and I sailed *Jennifer K* out to one of the Mississippi barrier islands and anchored overnight. That had to be one of the most miserable nights I have ever spent anchored out. I should probably try to remember the name of that little island we visited just to make sure I NEVER go back there. Whatever its name, that place had the most aggressive mosquitoes I have ever experienced.

We launched in Biloxi and sailed out across a stretch of open water to that miserable little sand island. As we got close to the shoreline bugs descended and basically drove us back out to sea. We finally settled on an anchorage a hundred yards offshore and took refuge in the tiny cabin. I didn't have bug screens so we had to put the duck boards in place and slam the sliding hatch closed. Holed up in that stuffy cabin was one thing. Repelling the bugs that made it through the inevitable crack between duck board and hatch was a challenge.

Morning came and we couldn't get out of Dodge fast enough. Only problem, our little Evinrude two-horse didn't want to start. There just are not that many moving parts on one of those little motors. No matter what I tried, no soap. Why did that matter? This was a sailboat, after all. Normally a pretty good one at that. Well, there was no wind.

Zip. And even as we drifted away from "mosquito island" the bugs stayed with us! Fitful, shifting catpaws, rain squalls, followed by hot and humid calms. Followed by more rain. And the damn bugs wouldn't let up! The same swarm seemed to stay on station with us for the entire crossing. I have never been mosquito bit in the pouring rain, before or since. But, that's what we were up against. Really quite bizarre.

It got stranger. The mosquitoes were so thick and so aggressive we were slapping them constantly. The area of a palm slap was nearly solid bugs. The deck of our drifting sailboat was regularly covered with swatted mosquitoes. I took to washing the decks down with buckets of sea water to flush the bodies of the attackers overboard. This wasn't just bad. It was getting dangerous. It took most of the day to drift and sail back to the launching ramp. I was so bit-up that I was actually getting delirious. Elisa was in about the same condition. It was just about all I could do to figure out how to get the car started and the boat back on the trailer. Yes, we were in a bad way.

Later, while I was disassembling the motor, I discovered a small piece of string that had managed to get into the raw water pump housing. Sort of like a small worm in a really small apple. Not much of a thing but it had, in fact, stopped the motor from running. A little piece of string and we end up swatting mosquitoes nonstop for 24 hours.

*Jennifer K* was a neat little boat. Some of the places I took her were a bit strange. We parted company in Oklahoma and I never saw her again. Jennifer and I parted company a little while before that. And that was the biggest tragedy of my life. There have been many boats but, only one Jennifer. Oh, how I wish we had been shipmates.

*Jennifer K* was a neat little boat. And did I mention, cute?

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The Snark was an impulse purchase. Buying boats this way is a tradition in my family. In fact, my grandfather named his cabin cruisers *Impulse 1* and *Impulse 2* for the urge that impelled him to buy them. In my case, I was planning to spend the long Fourth of July weekend at Cape Cod with my mother and siblings. It was my first summer back from teaching overseas. During my absence my mother had been forced to sell all the family boats. I anticipated feeling deeply frustrated to be on the Cape without being able to go out for a sail or even a row.

So when I laid eyes on the Super Snark all rigged up in the old Lechmere Sales department store in Cambridge, its sail flapping in a fan-generated breeze, and saw the price low in three digits, my credit card started burning a hole in my pocket. I picked an orange hull over a blue one as I thought it would be more visible and thus safer. The narrow little craft (11' long and 39" at its widest) would not stand much of a chance in a collision with a Bayliner or even the water skiers that plied the relatively calm waters of Red Brook Harbor. So the more visible this little boat the better!

The disassembled boxed-up hull was so compact it slid atop my station wagon's roof rack like a new ironing board. My mother and siblings were surprised and pleased with the boat, especially my 13-year-old sister Tish. The next morning I assembled it on the lawn, a stone's throw from the harbor. It all went together quickly requiring only a wrench and a screwdriver. Though modest in size, my little Snark had a clean, white deck and a crisp, colorful sail. The dagger board and rudder were bright-finished tropical hardwood. No new boat owner in Red Brook Harbor was prouder than I.

The inaugural sail was gratifying. Though a far cry from the wave crashing power we had had in the Bullseye, with its mighty genoa jib and massive leaded keel, the Snark could still spank us along briskly. When sailing alone I got her to plane in a downwind run a few times. Three knots isn't fast but it seems meteoric when your perch is only 8" above sea level.

Tish and I had some good sails that weekend. We went as far as Bassett's Island. We also learned the wet consequences of exceeding the Snark's strict 320lb (145 kg) weight limit when Tish invited her friend Sarah along. We made it over the wind generated chop all right, but the big wake of a fat cruiser wending its way through the Bassett's Island channel gave us a soaking which made the girls scream. Tish and Sarah bailed out the bilge water with their wicked-up towels. On the way back I towed first one girl, then both of them through the water, which was perfectly feasible on a dead run, even with a lug sail of only 39 square feet (3.6 square meters).

#### Entering the Race

The Snark's public debut was at the end of that summer at the annual Red Brook Harbor Labor Day Race, an informal competition among the summer residents. Sailors were free to enter any type of boat. We knew the Snark couldn't keep up with the Widgeons, Bullseyes, and Herreshoffs but we decided to enter just the same as it was a good chance to see the neighbors. Back when we still had the Bullseye we turned in a couple of respectable finishes in this race. So it wasn't as if we had to prove our seamanship. We got many encouragements from the other participants

#### Snark Bytes

## The Race Around Bassett's Island

By Rob Gogan

who were probably glad to see the stodgy little Snark creeping up to the check-in dock with its tiny sail. The Bullseyes' smaller working jib alone was nearly as big and today they all flew giant genoa jibs about twice the size of our only sail. "At least we won't finish last," the other skippers were probably thinking.

One of our neighbors, the host and organizer this year, was a native of Germany. He was well organized, bustling around the dock with his clipboard and pencil, writing down the names of all the entries. Lacking a given name for my humble craft, I just identified her as "The Snark." As our neighbor wrote he pronounced the words slowly, "Rob and Tish Gogan in "The Snark." With his German accent it sounded like "De Schnahhhk," rhyming with "the shock." It made Tish laugh when I spoofed his pronunciation later.

I hoped for a respectable finish but I had watched Bullseyes pass Sunfish sailboats on every point of the wind and I knew a Sunfish could beat the Snark. So I was resigned to bringing up the rear. Tish, on the other hand, naively hoped for a win. We started the race in good position but the other boats all passed us and steadily pulled ahead. Tish sighed and "tsked" with frustration. "Can't we go any faster?" she asked desperately.

"I'm afraid this is top speed," I said. "We're going about as fast as we can." I pointed out how the sail was trimmed properly, the dagger board was at the right depth, and our bodies were positioned to ballast the boat and keep it upright for optimal wind-catching and minimal hull turbulence. We watched the other boats head for the South channel around Bassett's.

Given the current wind direction and state of tide, that was the course I myself would have chosen to round the island, too. But I decided that the only chance we had at avoiding last place was to try going the other way. Sometimes in a race there is a fluky breeze or current that helps only some of the competing boats. If there were any such advantage to be had we would increase our odds of being the only beneficiaries if we were the only ones going that way around the course. The race rules allowed it as long as we circumnavigated the island. It wasn't as sociable but the rest of the fleet was so far ahead that we couldn't socialize anyway. By the last couple of tacks, we could barely even see the others.

#### Parting from the Fleet

So we set off on our own course, taking the North Channel, tacking our way past Barlow's Landing and Wing's Neck. We were in reasonably good spirits while the rest of the fleet was out of sight and we could imagine that we were going to zoom ahead with a strongly favorable current. But the emergence of first the windsurfer coming the other way, far out in front, then a dozen more competing boats entering the North Channel on a run long before we had reached the halfway point, deflated all our hopes of outsmarting the others. I resigned myself to bringing up the rear. Tish, though, felt gloomy to be

in last place. Dressed only in a tee shirt and bathing suit, she started to shiver. She was a good sport to crew on a cloudy, breezy day. To distract her, I reminded her of Mr. Schnahhhk's pronunciation, saying "in de Schnahhhk" repeatedly, building up to it in elaborate sneezing and coughing fits. I don't think Tish would have laughed so hard if she hadn't been so cold and frustrated.

By the time we made it back to Mr. Schnahhhk's beach, all the other boats were moored and de-rigged, sitting empty on their moorings as if they'd been there all day. But our mother was waiting there on the dock with a consoling wave and smile. She made no comment about our sluggish performance. I think she was proud that our family had shown up to enter the race again.

Our mother was sad that circumstances had forced her to sell all the boats I and my siblings had grown up with. With the death of my grandfather and father a few years earlier and the downturn in the building industry on which our family's fortunes depended, my mother had been forced to sell all of our floating luxuries one by one and eventually the house itself. The casualty list included a 32' cabin cruiser, a 21' inboard-outboard, a 14' runabout with a 40-horse outboard, a Beetle Cat, the Bullseye, a Herreshoff 12½, a 12' lapstrake Amesbury skiff, and a couple of smaller dinghies. Worse than all the boats was the loss of the dock. My grandfather had installed it before environmental regulations made it nearly impossible. So even with a change in our family fortunes, the dock would probably never again be replaced. So my little Snark was the first flicker of hope that the next generation would pick up the boating torch and my mother wanted to fan the flames.

At the after-race party many of the other sailors made excuses for our finishing last. "That's a tiny little boat," or "You did well for being out in the narrowest of narrow craft." The heartiest condolences came from the next-to-last finisher. "You saved us from finishing last," he might have said. I appreciated their sympathy. At least we were out there!

I put the Snark to sleep for the winter in the backyard of my grandmother's house by the woodpile. That last summer weekend no other boat was used more than mine. We didn't win the blue ribbon at the race but the tiny Snark supplied more fun and memories per foot of hull length than any other boat in the harbor.

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If one is getting old, like me, one has probably attended some retirement parties. Some of these affairs are miserable obligations with long sentimental speeches given by dignitaries and presentations of gifts that are not amusing or useful. Attendance requires dressing up and an argument about who is supposed to put more money in the kitty can really make the event uncomfortable.

I work at a public school and people retire from places like that from time to time. It's kind of sad when the retiree is still enthusiastic about the job and is so knowledgeable that he/she can never really be replaced. The retiree used as an example in this article is one of those people. Readers of this magazine will automatically hold him in high esteem because he is an avid kayaker. I'll mention that his subject is Science because it will further enhance his standing among boaters who understand their boats and others connected to the natural world.

Rich already had his official retirement party, one of those that does double and triple duty. Several other retirees in the system shared the occasion and I didn't go. The official party was last June but Rich had to work until his September birthday in order to receive full benefits. So for his last day several of his colleagues organized a kayak outing and dinner party. As luck would have it, it was a beautiful early fall day.

It was decided that we would meet in the school parking lot and travel to the lake. Anyone who wanted to go but didn't have a kayak to use signed up in the mail room and those with extras brought them. I brought my sea kayak, two extras, and my son Andy's Aliden shell. Other teachers had their roof racks loaded with their boats. Brian, another teacher, had his big environmental carbon footprint style non-biodegradable V-8 gas powered stern drive boat which looked like fun.

The destination was Lake Quinsigamond, the deep glacial lake that marks the boundary between the city of Worcester, Massachusetts, and the town of Shrewsbury. The long and narrow lake resembles a river that lacks a current. Because of its length and placement between two major population centers, the lake provided a significant geographical barrier to those of an earlier time.

Three floating bridges were tried beginning in 1806, all inadequate and one disastrous. An earthen causeway was built in 1861 which, of course, altered the lake and impeded the new steamboats. The Worcester ar-

## Retirement Party Guidelines

By David J. Hagberg

chitect Eldridge Boyden (1810-1898) recognized the inadequacies of these solutions and designed a steel bridge to span the lake. He never saw his dream fulfilled and his dying words were, "That will make a fine bridge."

They never did make Boyden's steel bridge but the causeway was removed and a concrete bridge was completed in 1919. That one has been replaced with another concrete bridge which appears to also need replacing due to the disastrous consequences of road salt applications in winter. It is interesting to kayak under that bridge and marvel at the extent of the deterioration of the concrete and steel members, remembering the whole time that the bridge is bumper-to-bumper with cars and trucks. It's easy to consider the possibilities of structural failure at moments like that.

There is a fine restaurant right next to the bridge on the Shrewsbury (east) side of the lake and they have an equally fine dock with slips for boaters desiring a nice meal. Next to the dock is a little gravelly beach that is perfect for kayak landings. This was our ultimate destination and half the fun of the outing was getting there and back.

There are two places to launch on the north side of the lake. There is a really nice paved boat ramp and parking lot. I believe that one costs money. There is also a rough gravel lot right at the northern tip of the lake that is next to a rough gravel area for launching. I can say definitely that it's free so that's the one we used. We had nine kayaks and one shell with people of all levels of experience. Launching went smoothly.



The wind was against us but no one complained. The afternoon was so lovely and we were about as close to the water as one

can get without getting wet. That's the best thing about a kayak, I think. My son Andy was the only one who was not a teacher (he's a sophomore in high school) so he was pleased with himself when he discovered he could outdistance us with little effort. All of us (except Andy) were thinking about what the day would be like when we retired so we weren't really trying too hard.

When we were near the restaurant Brian came by in his big powerboat. Brian and his colleagues on board hooted and hollered at us and we shouted back some things about the virtues of being carbon-neutral. He had the perfect opportunity to respond by informing us that none of our little boats were biodegradable, would fill up landfills someday, used a lot of extra gas getting them there, the roof racks that we leave on all the time to transport them will waste more gas, etc., but he didn't. The guy teaches Civics, after all.

We tied up and went in. We had the deck, which has a canvas roof, all to ourselves. Quite a few more people came by land. Those of us who came across the water made sure we told the land-based folks that they had really missed something.

There were only two speeches. The first was by the Science Department Chair, Jane, and it lasted 18 seconds. Then Rich rose and gave a genuine, exquisite speech that was about how much fun his colleagues were. It lasted 33 seconds. It was great. Jane gave Rich an envelope which held our combined cash contributions which he will find useful. There was no dreadful loud band or deejay playing oldies that might be two generations older than what might be appropriate.

We ordered, the wait staff brought us our food, and we ate. We pooled our money together and Jane bundled it all up and had a conference with Megan, one of our Math teachers. What followed was really fun to watch and it was of great importance for the continuation of the perfect retirement party. Megan brought the money over to the register and everything came out to the penny. Of course, there was discussion and it took a while, but you just can't argue with a Math teacher who's armed to the teeth with facts and figures.

The paddle back was nice with the wind helping us. Lake Quinsigamond is used extensively for crew and on our way back we saw many long rowing shells with eight people rowing and one hunkered down riding. The shells were all being followed by people in outboard-powered boats with someone shouting instructions (it didn't sound like encouragement) over a megaphone. I was trying to figure out what the object of the expensive-looking outing was, but couldn't. Andy really felt smug this time because he had no trouble passing the menacing looking, high tech, carbon fiber hull/oar combinations that had 16 oars going and someone telling them how to go.

So that's how one does a retirement party. First, select a destination that is accessible by water for the ones who know how to live and by car for those who don't. The boating option automatically takes care of the dressing-up obligation and everyone who comes by boat will arrive in a sublime mental state. Second, make sure that only two people are allowed to make speeches and it will help if those two genuinely like each other. Third, get a math teacher to convince the establishment that everything has been paid for fair and square.

# A Salty Motorsailer

By Bryan Shrader

My boat is a 62-year-old work skiff which I have "civilized" into a very fun and salty motorsailer. It is 16' long and almost 8' wide. Being that beamy and quite under-canvassed there is almost no risk of going over, which here in the Pacific Northwest usually means death by hypothermia. PFDs only delay the process. Mine is a slow and relaxing sailboat.

The engine is a 9.9 Honda four-stroke in a well covered by a sound insulated lid which makes it a very quiet boat under power. The Honda is locked in place so that steering is done with the rudder. The mast is in a tabernacle and uses a winch to pull down on the butt which causes the mast to raise. Launching and retrieving this boat is very easy for one person.

The dinghy hanging on the stern davits has been a pleasant surprise for me. It is a ball to row, very maneuverable, stable, and it goes straight. It is only 6' long and 3' wide so there isn't enough room to row in the conventional manner. I borrowed the method of forward facing rowing (a simplified version) after reading about it in your magazine. It is very easy for beginners to row and probably a lot more fun. It's also good for old people with neck problems. The dinghy is my own design so there are no plans available but any average carpenter could build one for their children, grandchildren, or for themselves, it easily holds my 180lbs. If you think there is enough appeal in this boat I might consider drawing up some instructions.

I built an 8' version for myself for when my grandson is using the six-footer. It has enough room to row with conventional oars. At age 69 I find the extra power of conventional oars helpful. In the photo, I'm "push rowing" for better visibility.



## Radio Woes

By Don Abrams

In the early '90s I was delivering a Prout 38 cruising catamaran from Florida to Charleston with two buddies. The weather was good, the boat was well maintained, and we were having a fine time watching the coast go by. When we got to South Carolina we learned that the authorities were on the hunt for a stolen boat so all the bridge tenders on the ICW were being extra careful to get details on each passing boat. As we neared that first lonely bridge in the middle of nowhere I dutifully picked up the VHF mike and requested a bridge opening. I knew what was coming. So did my crew and they were already grinning. "Northbound multi-hull sailboat requests an opening, please."

"Coming up," was the prompt reply. Then the dreaded inevitable. "What's the name of your vessel, Cap'n?"

Hoping that the bridge tender was a fan of T.S. Eliot or "Cats" and a kind man, I clearly enunciated the boat's name, *Rumpelteazer*. By this time Alan and Teak were snickering openly.

"Say again," from the radio and my crew collapsed into convulsive guffaws.

I mournfully said again, *Rumpelteazer*. The sadistic bridge tender feigned confusion and asked me yet a third time. "*Rumpelteazer*," I moaned. As we passed through the open bridge I gave my tormentor a casual wave, courteously keeping all my fingers, not just the middle one, fully extended.

I opened the throttle a bit and motored on up the channel while the bridge rumbled closed behind. I was already mentally counting the remaining bridges between us and Charleston. The radio came to life again. "Captain, could you spell the name of your vessel for me?" I waited until the new surge of laughter aboard the boat calmed to a roar, and slowly spelled R-U-M-P-E-L-T-E-A-Z-E-R. When I was done, I glared back over my shoulder. A hand appeared from the bridge tender's window and give a friendly wave. I guess some days you're the goat.

A few summers later I was returning from the Bahamas in a sensibly named C&C 38 sloop on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. On weekends all the water around Miami is heavily polluted by a nasty mix of testosterone, horsepower, ignorance, and bad manners. For some reason one boater kept keying his VHF mike and whistling into it, "fweet, fweet, fweet, fweeeeet." Over and over and over again. I'd have switched the radio off but we were entering Biscayne Bay via the narrow channel through Stiltsville and I figured

that the prudent mariner should be listening for any signs of sanity among the high-speed fiberglass living rooms blasting by.

After ten minutes of shrill whistling, Channel 16 was seething with outraged demands for silence peppered with deprecating comments about the whistler. The increasingly abusive protests were delivered in accents from South America, Puerto Rico, the Caribbean, New York City, New Jersey, and numerous places I've never visited. It was ugly. I pictured the whistling jerk grinning at the chaos he'd incited.

Then a calm, Southern, good-old-boy voice interrupted the turmoil, "Y'all leave him alone. He's just callin' his mama." We never heard another whistle.

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It has been 17 years since I built my first Pygmy Goldeneye kayak. My wife bought me the kit for Christmas following our first kayak trip to Baja California in 1989. Now following the launching of my 17th boat, I thought I might share some of my thoughts and experience building stitch-and-glue plywood boats.

I have built 11 Pygmy kayaks, a Merry Wherry, a Bolger Cartopper, and a Wee Lassie strip canoe. The latest boats out the door were an Osprey for Mike Getz, a paddling buddy, and two Arctic Terns for Bay Area paddlers. It is satisfying to see the progress in kit quality over the years, but I also think the high finish level of my latest boats out the door reflect both my experience working with stitch-and-glue/plywood/epoxy/fiberglass boats, and some hard won skills.

#### Boat Building

In my far distant youth my thoughts were all about building a boat and sailing away, with an emphasis on the sailing part. A lot of other ambitions, adventures, and life choices, including establishing a rural based architectural practice, have gotten in the way of those first thoughts on seeing the world. Slowly, boat by boat, I have come to the realization that I love building boats. The paddling and sailing are still important elements of my life, but boat building satisfies a need to work with both my hands and my head that has been absent since I gave up trying to do house construction and practice architecture at the same time. Boat building isn't always easy or fun. There is plenty of room for mistakes but wooden boats are a joy to build and use.

What attracts me to boat building is the opportunity to build something beautiful. It certainly was my motivating interest in building my first Goldeneye, a boat that John Lockwood designed with styling roots in English sailing canoes and the kayaks of L.F. Herreshoff, a kayak with a definite sense of history and the continuity of sensible designs for practical paddling. In the same way the Wee Lassie, as developed by Mac McCarthy, carries with it the early outdoor ethics of Nessmuk. This was very appealing to the poet Gary Snyder as he searched for a canoe model to have me build for his use.

People sometime give me a certain look when I say I build from kits. A look that says,

## Small Boat Building... An Avocation

By Bruce Boyd

"Oh that's not real boat building." I want to make it clear to anyone attempting to build a boat from a kit that this is true boat building. The facts that the materials come nicely packaged in a box, that the material is perfectly cut to the right dimensions, and the tool needs are minimal does not take away from the boat building experience.

I have had the opportunity to tour the Eric Goetz yacht building yard. He starts many of his world class racing sailboats with a kit of parts cut by computer. It does not take away any from his status as a premier boat builder. I do not claim to be in his league by any means. As I said before, there is plenty of room for mistakes, creative additions, and modifications of technique. There is also that learning curve. It continues on forever. Building from your kit of parts is just smart boat building.

The Pygmy boat design implementation has gotten better over the years. Partly I think this comes from good feedback from builders as well as the increasing design skills of the folks at Pygmy Boats. I am sure that the other companies offering stitch-and-glue kayak kits have also benefited from the experiences of the messabout builder community. We have an advantage in the kayaking world by having the rigorous boat tests of *Sea Kayaker* magazine, which does not discriminate on the basis of manufacturer or building material, in testing kayaks in the field.

Today's kayak kits go together with minimal stress or torturing of the plywood. I remember fighting the ends to get them to align equally at the bow and stern in the first boats. I don't seem to have that problem anymore. In fact, I have been experimenting with using fewer wire ties lately, especially on the decks, for a cleaner look. I believe this is a testament to the accuracy of the panel shapes more than my skill. Some kayak builders may remember setting string lines for panel layout in the first kit instructions. So bold to leave all that out.

#### My Building Practice

Generally I stick to the well-written and clear building manual furnished with Pygmy kits as my guide to construction. I still read it once through when I get a new kit. Over the years I have made some observations, changes, or deviations to the building process that other builders might find interesting. Some that come to mind are as follows:

On my wife Holly's Goldeneye Standard I just taped all the inside seams with 2" wide tape and a coat of epoxy. There is no inner cloth. Her boat is one of the lightest boats I have ever built. It has survived 14 years without any damage except a crack in the coaming which I caused practicing a wet entry. I would not recommend this technique except for those who really need the absolute lightest boat. Holly doesn't need it, I just wanted to try it out.

The drawback to omitting the cloth on the inside is very visible checking of the plywood, staining, and some difficulty keeping the inside clean. If someone asked me to build a boat with taped seams only I would put four coats of epoxy on the inside surfaces for ease of maintenance. I would also seriously question the need. Why sweat one or two additional pounds of boat? Carry less weight instead. Besides, these wooden boats are still much lighter than the plastic models.

My fiberglassing skills have improved over the years. My goal in each task is to minimize sanding. I use techniques learned from the writings of the late Robb White, mainly the assiduous use of stiff chip brushes to spread epoxy and always working with plenty of heat. Epoxy flows slowly. Most of the runs show up after one has cleaned up and is about to leave the shop. This is especially so when the shop and epoxy is cold. I use rasps and files to clean up joints and filled chines and don't sweat the small drips and runs until I have all my coats on.

Sanding the bare plywood is very dangerous with any kind of power sander (the surface veneer seems much thinner in today's plywood) so I tend to use a sanding block when I do sand. I have gotten into using a sharp chisel or a scraper to shave the edges of fiberglass tape, runs, and drips.

I have been installing a tiny inner gunwale in most boats lately. It provides a wider shelf for the thickened epoxy glue line when

putting the deck on. It is usually a piece of  $\frac{1}{4}$ " quarter round or a piece of cedar about  $\frac{1}{4}$ "x $\frac{1}{2}$ ". I glue it on with clothespin clamps. One of the nice things about this little inner gunwale (the  $\frac{1}{4}$ "x $\frac{1}{2}$ " piece) is that it allows me to use small plastic electrical wire clamps screwed to this inner gunwale to attach rudder cable tubing. This is much cleaner than using thick globs of epoxy to hold down the tubing. Even with my wider glue joint at the gunwale, I still fillet and fiberglass tape the gunwale/deck joint on the inside.

We don't have bulkheads or hatches in our personal boats. I like loading from the cockpit. If I am asked to install bulkheads and hatches I install the bulkheads before I glue down the deck. It makes for neater and cleaner installation. When I am asked to do bulkheads after the deck is on I use a technique I learned from Guy Light. He first glasses the fiberglass tape to the bulkheads with half hanging past the edge and lets it harden. He then installs the bulkhead. The tape bends to the hull sides and bottom as it is pushed into place and then he finishes the epoxy work. The other side of the bulkhead is filleted and taped using short lengths of pre-wetted fiberglass tape. Guy has also been using peel ply over the bow and stern tape, at the keel wear strip, and the deck edge. It gives a very smooth finish but is a little tricky to use. Practice first.

Because of our local climate my shop is cold in winter and hot in the summer. I switch between the System Three epoxy supplied in the kits and West System® Clear Coat epoxy. The less viscous West epoxy works better at low temperatures and I seem to get fewer runs and drips. I can't say there is any difference in performance but I do like to use the West epoxy for my final coats because it has some LTV protection in it. I have never had a problem putting on a coat from one brand over another brand on the same boat.

Having a dedicated space to build boats is really valuable. Epoxy drips and sanding dust is inevitable. I share my shop with my wife. She has her own woodshop with all the cool tools but she finishes her fine art wood sculpture in the boat shop. Drips on the floor don't bother us but the sanding dust is an issue. I use a shop vac hooked up to my sander most of the time.

I can fit two boats under construction at one time. This is sometimes really advantageous as it mitigates some of the drawbacks of the stop and start nature of stitch-and-glue

construction. As epoxy is hardening on one boat one can be carrying out another step on the other boat.

I wanted Mike's Osprey to be super sturdy so I did a fairly extensive end pour before putting the deck on. We often put in at a concrete ramp and the ends inevitably get dragged over the rough concrete. I also added a third layer of glass under the seat and added a layer of glass to the underside of the deck around the cockpit. It is still a light boat.

Final finishing of the boats is the most difficult and longest task of each project. I mostly use a brush, sometimes a roller, and like to add color accents. Getting a good brushed on finish takes more patience than I seem to have. The boats look handmade, which I think looks better than a handmade kayak trying to look like a shiny automobile. Someday I will learn to spray. Bristol Finish's two-part polyurethane is fantastic but the solvents require a vapor mask. I have gone back to good quality varnish for my health.

### Living with Pygmy Kayaks

The boats that come back to the shop for scratch repair and refinishing are generally in good shape. Folks take care of their boats because they love them. Keeping them out of the sun is so important. Keeping them clean and dry on the inside is essential.

I cannot emphasize enough that putting four coats of epoxy inside and out is really important, regardless of any weight savings. Inside it makes it easier to keep the boat clean and water vapor has less chance of penetrating through the plywood. My Goldeneye has some exterior delamination after 15 years without maintenance (the builder's boat). I really think it is caused by moisture vapor on the inside getting through the plywood and under the fiberglass skin (yes, it is time that I fix it).

Putting on four or more coats of epoxy makes the epoxy part of the final finish. It builds thickness faster than varnish and helps give the finish depth. Most people want a clear varnish finish. In the beginning I did more decorating with stripes and color sections, now I spend my time getting the varnish job right. On the water a little color shows up better so I still think it is a good idea, but whatever the owner wants...

I try to not sand until I have built up those four coats of epoxy. Using a stiff chip brush and West System roller covers for the

later coats keeps runs and drips to a minimum. Between coats I go over the boat with a file and sharp chisel to get rid of brush hairs and runs, keeping the sanding to one pass, using 100 grit down to 220 grit, between the last epoxy and the first varnish coat.

I keep a spray can of polyurethane varnish handy along with a scrubby. If a scratch looks deep I spray it with the varnish. The scratch will disappear, but more importantly, the varnish will protect the fiberglass cloth. The fiberglass fabric, if exposed to the weather and water too long, will discolor. Without this varnish, when getting around to sanding the finish down and filling the scratch with epoxy, the glass cloth won't disappear again. Then it is a nasty job of grinding and patching fiberglass to bring the looks back. Most folks just start painting their boats with solid colors at this stage of the game.

My goal when I build a boat is to get to a level of craftsmanship and finish that pleases the eye from 10' or so. Of course, there are goofs. These days, because of the thinness of the veneers, it is easy to sand the plywood just a little too much and expose the dark glue line and sometimes the deck edge lap joint isn't perfect. The real objective is to get on the water in a safe and sturdy kayak, just put some vinyl tape along the edge and go paddling.

Other boats that I have built have given other lessons. Strip planking a Wee Lassie to squeeze out the last ounce of weight was a challenge. Devising a sailing rig for the Bolger Cartopper gives me the chance to experiment knowing it will not be a dead loss. Building the Merry Wherry gave me insight into the work of another designer and stitch-and-glue construction on a larger scale. So far I have not had any failures. I have two larger boats I still need to build, an experimental asymmetrical catamaran of my own design and Phil Bolger's Beringatia design, a boat I have wanted to build for many years but have not begun because I absolutely want to know that I can start and finish it in the style it deserves.

I would like to thank Pygmy Kayaks for such nice boats. They have enabled me to enjoy a wonderful avocation building boats for other paddlers from time to time. Pygmy kayaks have given my family great adventures over the years. One of my greatest pleasures is to be with my friends paddling wooden boats that we have built. But the best is surely the pleasure in the paddling.



The band saws have sung since my last chapter on the 28' cutter *Fore An' Aft*. You will remember I mentioned that my friend Edward N. Wigton was having one of these vessels built by Wm. Bunce at Huntington. Well, she is all planked now. And I have had visible proof that all the arrangements I have shown on the cabin plan will go in her innards and with a bit to spare. The floor can be lowered nearly 2" and still we have ample width; imagine the headroom this gives, nearly 6'! A lot for a small boat with moderate freeboard and a very low deck house.

*Fore An' Aft*, this is the name the first of the fleet will bear, is an uncanny thing in the matter of room, she is positively startling in this respect. I am afraid the plans do not convey her size nor her slimness. The critics have unanimously come to the conclusion that she will sail fast and she really looks as though she might. But not being especially interested in speed of any kind, I shall not fret over this matter. About the middle of June we shall know, she will be launched about then. But she is big and very much of a ship.

Not having yet come to the publishing of the construction plans there is something I must explain before telling of her painting. This is in the matter of her wales. Unlike most small craft these will be made of heavier material than the rest of the planking. The specifications call for  $\frac{1}{8}$ " white cedar planking from the keel to the lower wale, then three wales 4" wide made from  $1\frac{3}{4}$ " cedar. The difference in thickness to show, this is as it should be.

Now in painting we shall paint the three wales with Depaco yacht white but the bulwark rail and the planking between the water

## The 28' Cutter *Fore An' Aft*

### Part 3

By William Atkin

Reprinted from *Fore An' Aft*, May 15, 1927  
(We don't have the issues with Parts 1 and 2

but felt Part 3 on its own held much of  
interest about how boat building was  
practiced 80 years ago)

line and the bottom of the wales will be varnished. She is planked with clear white cedar. We shall use Kauri varnish. And the bottom? There is just one paint for that, antifouling Depaco white.

There are a great many things hidden away in the cabin of a cruising yacht. A great many things; I have seen bottles, well there are the water tanks, you know. In this *Fore An' Aft* these are located under the settees. Now a water tank in a boat is not just a square receptacle in which to store water. It must be fitted with suitable splash plates and must be excellently made. Either copper or galvanized iron can be used but if copper is selected the inside must be tinned. I prefer galvanized iron, first because this material is stronger, and secondly because water keeps better in iron. All joints in either case must be soldered and riveted.

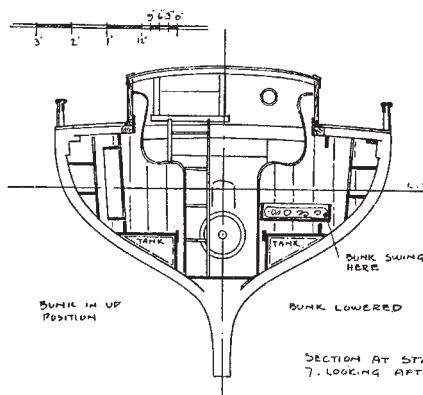
The little sketch herewith will give an idea of how the tanks should be made. A big filling hole over the outlet is desirable as it permits getting at the inside for cleaning.

Since there is a tank in each side means must be gotten to prevent the water from flowing from the windward tank to the one to leeward. One shut-off valve in the line connecting the two tanks will accomplish this. I should place a valve near the outlet in both tanks for then water may be pumped from either or from both. The water supply is always a bother.

When I designed the Gordon cruisers I showed the pump under the sink board and inside the locker using an ordinary small size brass bilge pump. This works beautifully. Because the sink is below the water line in *Fore An' Aft* the water must also be pumped out, another pump of the same kind is ideal for this purpose. The water tanks should be made of 16 gauge galvanized iron. There are several advantages in fitting the tanks under the transom as shown, not the least of which is the ease with which the tanks can be gotten out for cleaning or replacement. Simply take up the transom tops which, by the way, should be fastened down with screws. Each of the tanks will hold approximately 30 gallons.

There is a gasoline tank up under the deck either side of the cockpit. These I should make of 16 gauge copper with seams riveted and soldered. Like the water tanks these must be fitted with splash plates, but in this case these should extend athwartships of the tank as well as fore and aft, each of these tanks will hold 15 gallons. The reason for the copper gasoline tanks is that it will be a difficult job to remove these should replacement ever be necessary. If properly built these tanks should last the life of the boat.

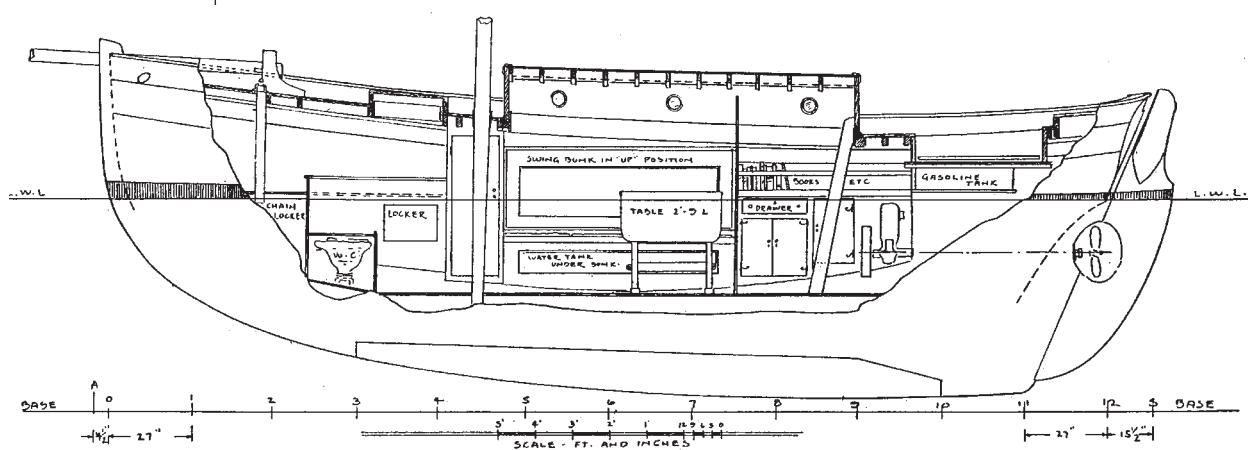
I should fit the outlet pipes as shown in the sketch. Note that the outlet is fitted an

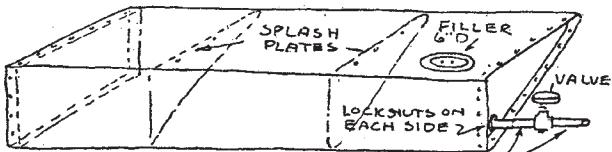


The starboard side of the cabin of the 28' cutter *Fore An' Aft*. Note the chart table with book shelves above. The table is bigger than it looks: 2' 10" long by 2' 10" wide when the leaf is up. I have tried out the idea of finishing the ends of the settees in Dutch style as shown in the sectional drawing. This looks well, and gives a cosy atmosphere to the cabin.

The section at Station 7 shows how the bunks fold up. Very simple this and inexpensive. One might use box springs in the bunk, just an upholsterer's job.

The entire interior will be finished in white pine and black walnut, varnished. Only the underside of the deck and the cabin top will be painted, and this in cream white.





One of the water tanks.

inch above the bottom of the tank, this for the purpose of preventing sediment from flowing into the feed pipe. There should be a union and a shut-off cock at each tank. The feed pipe had best be made of  $\frac{3}{8}$ " copper tubing and fitted up with solderless fittings. Of course, the tanks should be piped together by running a line of tubing across the boat together by runfeed line to the motor from a T in this cross line. Always shut off one of the cocks at the tank while under sail for otherwise the gasoline in windward tank will flow into the leeward tank.

Like the water tank I should use a large screw filter, this to be at least 3" diameter and located as shown. Now since air must be free to find its way into a gravity tank it would be well to arrange a vent on each tank as shown in the sketch. This vent pipe should be made from  $\frac{1}{8}$ " copper tubing and lead through the side of the cockpit. Turn a short bend in its upper end and no water can find its way into the tank. The  $\frac{1}{8}$ " tubes should be fastened to the sides of the cockpit with copper straps. Now if you are careful in filling *Fore An'Aft*'s tanks there will never be an odor of gasoline in the cabin.

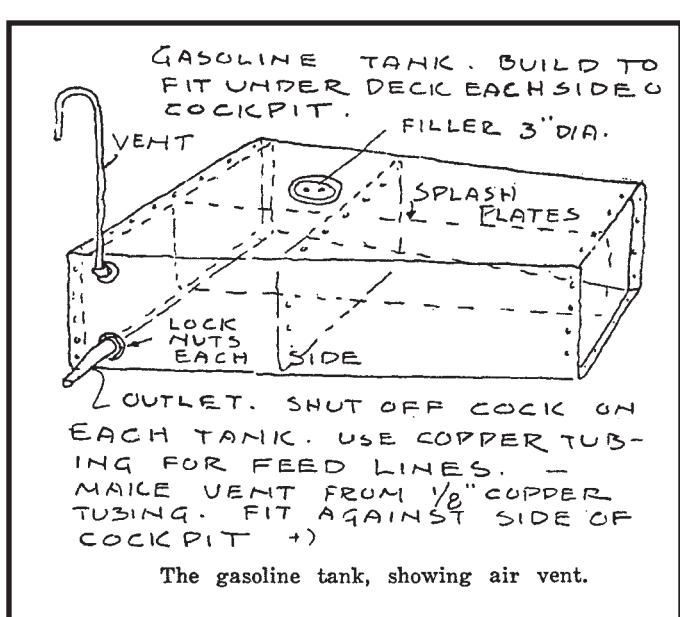
The gasoline tanks are set on a heavy shelf and must be securely fastened. I believe it is a good plan to lay canvas under these tanks and between the cleats that fasten the tanks down and the tanks. This certainly will prevent chafing. There are a great many folks who feel that the only safe tank to use is one of cylindrical form. There is no reason in the world why rectangular tanks cannot be made both strong and tight. For any given space the rectangular tank will have the greater capacity. There is one sure thing and that is that

a cylindrical tank is a difficult thing to install, and for that reason undesirable.

Now we come to the engine. I had perfect satisfaction with a single cylinder, two-cycle of 5hp fitted with one-way clutch in his cutter. We expect a speed of at least 6mph with this turning a two-blade propeller 17" in diameter by 16" pitch at 600 rpm. I believe the 5hp engine is ample.

The exhaust on an auxiliary is a bother. The engine is entirely below the water line which is an invitation to the water outside to flow down the exhaust pipe. If cooling water is injected into the exhaust pipe at the engine it must be shut off before the engine is stopped, and as motors have been known to stop unexpectedly it is not always possible to take care of this very necessary duty. Therefore, the better way to do the thing is to use a hot exhaust pipe from the engine to the muffler which must be set up under the deck. I like the Thermex muffler because it lends itself to this plan.

The Thermex is a spherical arrangement which takes the exhaust in at its top as well as



The gasoline tank, showing air vent.

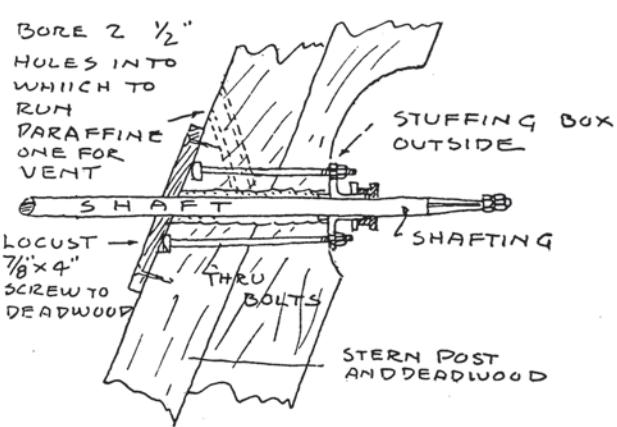
is set at an incline. There should be a short length of steam hose here to absorb vibration. The pipe nipple through the stern should be made from brass. It should be screwed into the oak stern and permitted to project outside about  $\frac{3}{8}$ ". Since the stern will be 2" thick and of solid oak there will be little danger of the pipe breaking out. The dry part of the exhaust line must be lagged with asbestos to keep the heat in.

My pet idea of pouring melted paraffin into the shaft log after the motor has been lined up is shown in another sketch. Now I should fit the stuffing box outside, this being the proper place for it. And as you will note this is to be through fastened with bolts; heads inside, nuts out. Inside I should fit a piece of locust wood as a bearing and as a dam to keep the paraffin in. Arranged as shown there will never be a leak the shafting will not score, and even if the stuffing box is knocked off the shaft will remain water tight.

Rather than use lead pipe for the plumbing I should use rubber hose fastened to the fittings and to the sea cocks with hose clamps. Hose is better in many ways, not least of which is its flexibility. Then, too, it is so easy to replace in case of leakage, and anyone who has tried will tell you that lead piping is not easy to replace or to repair. Rubber hose will last nearly as long a time as lead. And, which is rather a consideration, rubber hose is the cheaper by a good margin.

I should use hose for the scupper pipes fitting a shutoff cock at the place in the hull where these lead overboard and a flanged copper nipple in the cockpit floor. Then by shutting off the sea cocks, after draining the scupper pipes, of course, and plugging the scuppers in the cockpit the possibility of water freezing in the scuppers and bursting the pipes is removed. The foregoing is mentioned in case the craft is left in the water all winter. In this case the deck and cockpit must be covered with heavy canvas to exclude rain water from draining in the cockpit. If the sea cocks are not fitted the rubber hose should be wrapped in a thick wrapping of old rags, this will prevent freezing.

Now I shall pipe down. By June I shall have some photos of *Fore An'Aft*.



The paraffine filled shaft alley

Every editor knows more about what transpires in his trade than he can possibly pack into any one issue of his paper or magazine. A lot of information slops over that is never retrieved. In the same way, every boat designer goes through a similar drill on every boat he designs. Much of the research backing his engineering decisions develops sidelights of artful recall that cannot be passed along in drawings.

Eventually these tidbits of information, minor in themselves but useful study nonetheless, pile up to interesting proportions. Somewhere, at some time, to someone, a particular fragment of information could be of extremely high value. In that spirit I pass along some retrieved design lore right from my own School of Rapped Knuckles.

Some examples:

What is it that makes some boats good to ride in while others are dogs that engender seasickness? Comfort can be measured.

Why do round-bilged boats always tend to heel outward on turns? Why do fast V-bottom boats heel inward? Ever stop to ponder the reason for this?

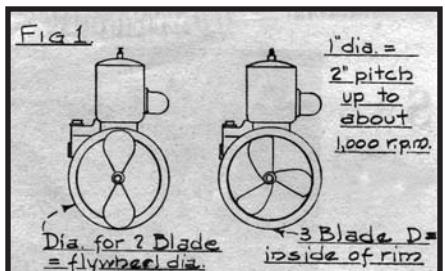
How can you pick the right rudder area? Usually a blade area equal to one-fourth the immersed midsection area is right for a powerboat. If she's twin screw, divide the area between two rudders.

Such questions, and their short and snappy answers are the gist of this writing.

### Propeller Size

Before I answer more of the above posers, let's dispose of a perennial question. What size propeller should you use on a one-cylinder, two-cycle, old-timer inboard engine, the kind that run between 600rpm and 1,000rpm? Here's the rule of thumb on that one:

These engines ranged in size from 2hp to 10hp in the one-cylinder size. I presume more 4hp to 6hp sizes were built than any other. If a manufacturer wanted to sell more horsepower, he added cylinders. But early on I noticed that the one-cylinder engines were supplied with two-bladed wheels of exactly the same diameter as the engine flywheel. (See Fig 1.)



Usually, these propellers were "square," meaning they had the same pitch as diameter.

They came in a variety of patterns from the broad-tipped blade, down to narrow-bladed S-snakes that were touted as weedless. Generally the elliptical blade with a blade width of 30% of the diameter was standard.

If a three-bladed wheel was required, usually because of skeg or draft limitations, the diameter of the propeller then became about equal to the diameter of the flywheel inside the flywheel rim.

In most cases the two-bladed was the more authoritative on "push." This is because disc area is larger. Everyone who has fooled much with propellers eventually learns that

## Tips from an N.A.'s Notebook

By Weston Farmer, N.A. (1974)

Designers can profit from bits and pieces such as these

the middle third, or boss portion, of the disc area swept by a wheel is worthless. In fact, if it could be eliminated, as eventually was done by some outboard engine makers in later decades when the exhaust was led through the central propeller boss, the wheel was more efficient. The high blade angle in the central third of a wheel doesn't contribute much thrust, only torque resistance.

It is interesting in this connection that all old engine builders used to state that "1" of diameter is the equivalent of 2" of pitch" in holding revolutions down.

(Then, as now, no boat owner ever felt he had just the right wheel for the engine he'd bought for his boat and propeller problems and servicing were a significant proportion of factory overhead.)

The one-cylinder, two-cycle engine is a notorious "lugger" and it is hard to whittle a propeller problem down to much finer points than the rule of thumb. These mills will run well with anything they'll turn and the boat speed never seems to change much no matter how much prop experiment goes on.

### What is Comfort?

What makes for a comfortable boat to ride aboard?

Some boats act like floating potato chips and others heave and ascend like floating lead mines.

Too much action is nerve wracking but the sluggish unresponsiveness of a boat which is a slow but deep plunger frequently finds the unseasoned stomach fighting to stay inboard of its owner's teeth.

If you study the problem at first hand, out on the heaving briny, and have been recently wrestling with such design "factors" as metacentric height and rolling periods, you'll conclude that these are fine drawing board targets, but that there is another design

dimension you do not perceive and which cannot be resolved entirely by drafting. It is the lift and lilt and gyrating and corkscrewing motion imparted by a seaway.

I suppose these motions are susceptible to computer analysis but who has time or savvy enough to properly program and solve them? There must be some rule of thumb target or ruling factor that will provide a boat which will be comfortable at sea and which Mr Joe Average can apply. I believe I have discovered one.

I think you'll find it in the pounds-per-square-foot loading of the water plane area. This means the plane intersected by the boat's waterline. I think you'll find that anything less than 64lbs displacement per square foot of water plane will give you a light and corky boat motion.

This estimate is based on the knowledge that the old Elco 34 Standardized Cruisette was right on that 64lb figure. Highly developed and carefully evolved, this motorboat was the finest power craft I ever had my hands on. Her "feel" was just right. (See Fig 2.)

In a fast V-bottom cruiser, a lighter figure than this may be what you need. In a cruising boat for long vacation cruising, the 64lb figure seems about right. In a boat that is to be a workboat about 80lbs of displacement per square foot of water plane seems to produce a solid "with it" feel. (See Fig 3.)

I have not amassed a wad of figures on this, the perception and propositional discovery are a new hunch.

### Loading is Key

In the early days of my love affair with engineering I designed and flew a number of light airplanes. Then, and even today, wing loading per square foot was the chief determining characteristic of forgiving performance. I believe that if a few experienced designers got together and compared figures on pounds-per-square-foot of water plane area a pattern would emerge and that their best medium-size boats would be near the 64lb rule of thumb.

My theory is based on a simple fact which I may be able to get across with a few simple sketches. Look at Fig 4. If you take the average water plane of a transom-sterne

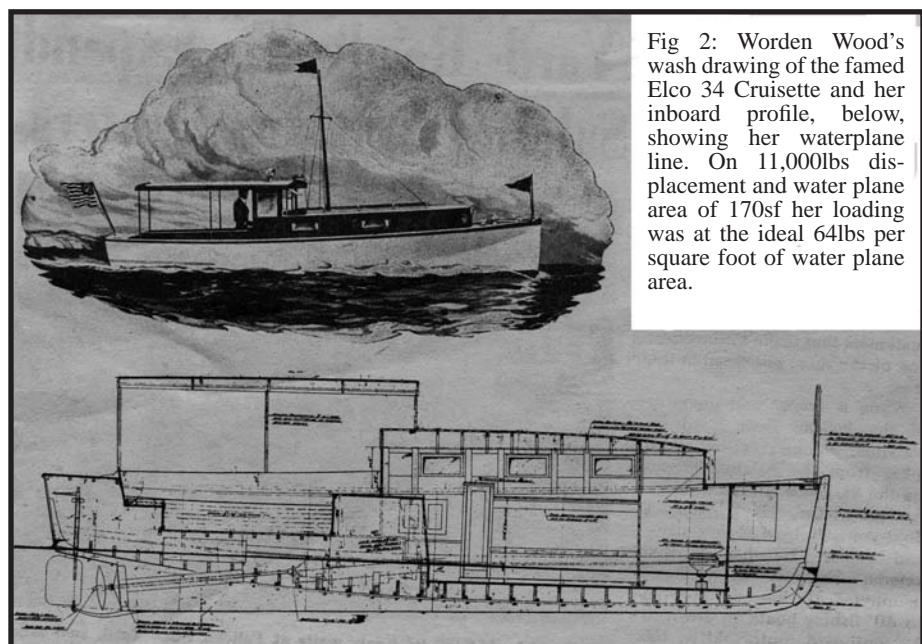


Fig 2: Worden Wood's wash drawing of the famed Elco 34 Cruisette and her inboard profile, below, showing her waterplane line. On 11,000lbs displacement and water plane area of 170sf her loading was at the ideal 64lbs per square foot of water plane area.

motor cruiser you will find that a rectangle equal to the waterline length times the waterline beam multiplied by a fineness coefficient of .70 will just about equal the actual water plane area. (See Fig 4a.)

If you were to saw a solid block of wood to this outline, one foot deep, and load it to 64lbs to the square foot, it would have zero buoyancy with its upper face just level with the boat's waterline. )See Fig. 4b.) The tendency of any surface disturbance would be to move the block gently with the same feel and speed as the surface disturbance because each cubic foot of seawater weighs 64lbs. Thus, in boat action, you would get the "feel of the water."

Now suppose you cut this same water plane block 4' deep and loaded it to a square foot figure of four times 64lbs or 256lbs per square foot. Instead of the water plane block being in kinetic equilibrium inertially, it would take a fulsome heave of a sea to start this mass upward. Once in motion it would tend to keep going upward long after the sea had passed. Then, support being lacking, it would inertially plunge down below the water level. In plain language, the craft with this loading would be "out of synch" with the sea. Fig 4c shows this.

Boats that have this characteristic are highly uncomfortable. It does not matter what the metacentric height may be, the boat is uncomfortable.

Light boats, loaded at less than the weight of sea water, may require a light loading to achieve speed but the reverse of the above action takes place and considerable tossing and slapping results. Speed always costs something.

## Scum-Line School

Now I am talking to the design tribe as a designer, just as a doctor might talk to a medical student. The innocent bystander may not tune in and to him all this is garbage. He may be of the school that says, "Waterline? Hell, toss her in and well paint to the scum line next fall."

'S all right with me, chum. But without feedback, no designer can amass figures

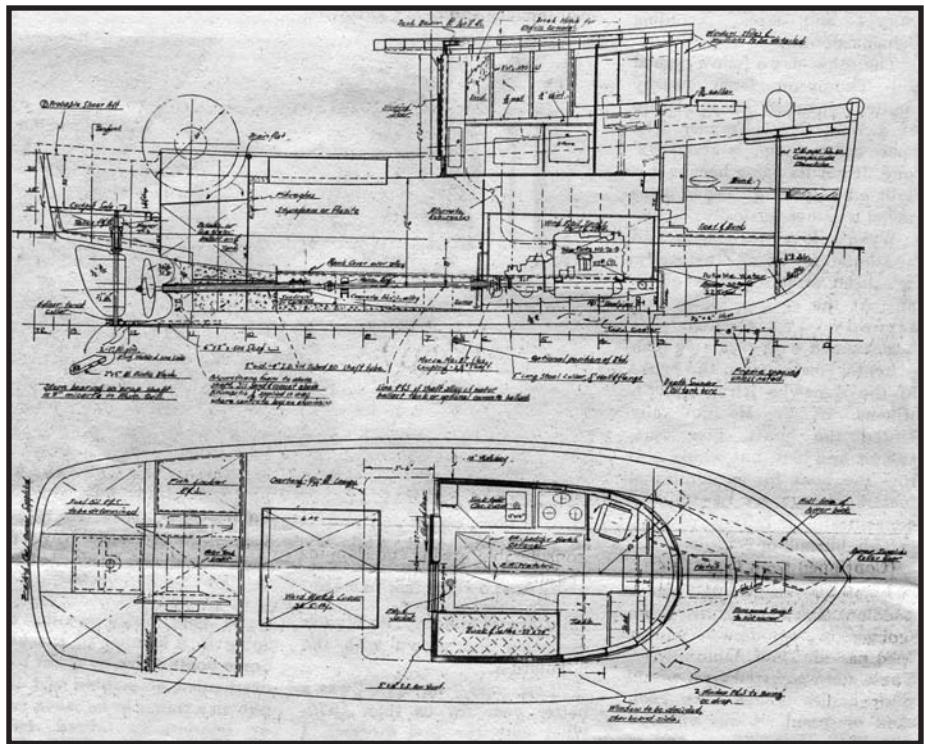


Fig 3: This sturdily constructed 42'x13½'x4½' aluminum gilnetter has 362sf of water plane with a loading starting at 80psf light to 118psf loaded, the difference between light but solid feel and "logey" handling.

which serve him in cuffing-in in pre-determining his design. I think the water plane loading idea will yield more good boats than all the metacentric studies around.

See the sketches for a visual grip on the idea.

In professional yards, staffed with competent naval architects, the motor yachts are always designed with half-tank fuel and water loads. Then, upon launching, first the draft marks are established for bow and stern without fuel, then with half fuel. This is done by bringing the craft alongside a pier and dropping a  $\frac{3}{4}$ "x $\frac{3}{4}$ " staff from the stem head until

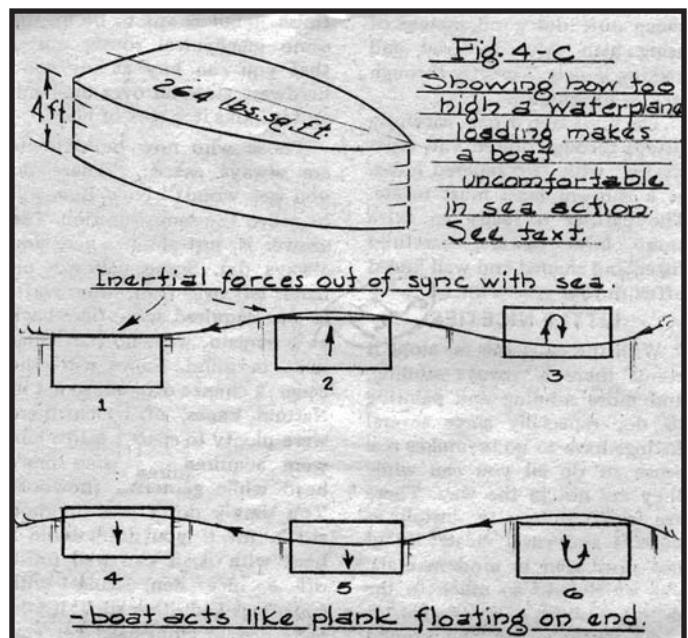
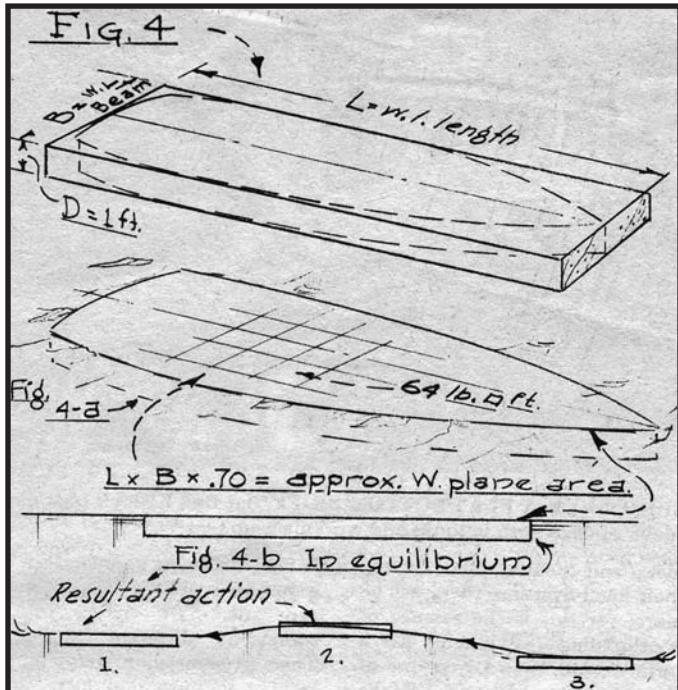
it kisses the water and then marking the stem head point.

The same is done aft at the centerline of the vessel at the crown of the transom and the point is marked on the staff.

Then half water and half fuel is stowed and another set of marks is taken.

With the two staffs the naval architect then goes to the loft and, by means of the staffs, produces the actual line as launched and the line with half fuel load. Then he strikes the new line on the floor with chalk line and finds out where his immersed sections are actually topped transversely.

If this is too finicky, he may content himself with striking a pair of actual water-



lines on a print of his lines and, projecting the new sections, run up a displacement calculation based on Simpson's Rule. (All boat delineators will know the Simpson method so I'll not go into it for general consumption).

With his new waterlines, the actual ones "as built," he can then come up with the actual launched displacement (weight) figures and see what his "miss" factor amounts to.

Only once in over 50 years of designing have I ever designed a boat that hit the designed line right smack on the nose. This was the hogged-sheer Elco 32 ala PT Boat outline which Hank Uhle and I worked up together at Elco.

I have never seen one designed by anyone else that was exactly right either. But bear this fact in mind, THE BOAT IS ALWAYS RIGHT. It is the designer's estimate that falls amiss. Usually it is slight.

Generally the bow will be low by an inch or two and the rump will be high ditto. Eli Gunnell of Burger once told me he'd never seen one that hit the mark on the nose. Neither have I. And, dear friends, the reason for this is NOT that calculations go amiss, although they sometimes do, but it is due to an inherent 5% or so error in jolly old Aft. Simpson's rule that favors the fat end of any curve.

We will not belabor the point. An entire article could be written on the subject. Suffice it to inform the general reader that all designers use Simpson's Rule when calculating displacement from revised sectional areas such as "as-launched" waterlines.

The way this is done in design offices is with a polar planimeter which traces over the known vessel section and comes up with a measurement answer on a little wheel. (See Fig 5.)

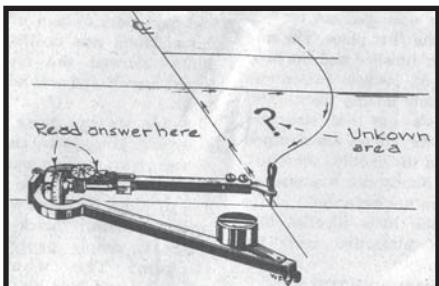


Fig 5: Yacht designers use the polar planimeter to measure sectional areas. From known immersed areas they can "weigh" a boat and find her designed displacement.

Possibly the general reader will not concern himself with the how of Simpson or worry about how Amsler's Polar Planimeter works.

But any odds and ends story like this that doesn't pass along some scoop about both Mr Simpson and Mr Amsler isn't worth its salt. I have gone to great length to unearth a bit of biography about these two patron saints of naval architecture.

Thomas Simpson was an Englishman born at Market Bosworth, Leicestershire, on August 20, 1710. As a boy, according to the custom of the times, he was indentured to the textile trade and while at the looms at Spitalfield he amused himself by learning mathematics with such self-taught proficiency that he was appointed Professor of Mathematics at prestigious Woolwich College in 1743. He was then 33 years of age.

The mathematical philosophies at this pre-dawn of the Industrial Revolution had

been given a great injection of vigor and ferment by the *Principia* of Isaac Newton (1642-1727), written after Newton had been bonked on the head by a failing apple and had come up with his theory of gravity and the invention of calculus.

There must have been some powerful apples falling in those days. Thomas Simpson, born 17 years prior to Newton's death, was also a contemporary of the Scottish inventor James Watt (1736-1819) whose invention of the double-acting steam engine and condensing power plant was about to harness the energy of coal and thus usher a new way of life into the world. It was Watt, you'll remember, who defined what the unit of power was which we use today. It is based on the work done by a horse, the lifting of 33,000lbs one foot in one minute. One horsepower. (It is presumed the horse was full of oats and willing to grunt.)

Simpson, the young weaver, while still at his looms came up with a theory for solving fluxions and on the way to this intellectual triumph, still in his 20s, he evolved his famous series of rules for getting areas and volumes from linear plans and linear measurements.

Simpson is reported to have lived a turbulent life, passing from mortal coils on May 4, 1761, not yet 51 years old.

It will certainly come as a relief to naval architects to learn that Simpson was not a sheep herder. The subject of naval architecture is woolly enough. Simpson is the patron saint of today's naval architects.

#### Another Genius

Now we come to Amsler's polar planimeter. For about a hundred years after Simpson's death engineers had to arrive at the mechanical task of determining areas of irregular outlines, such as the shape of a ship's sections below water, by either triangulation or by ghosting scale square feet over the section and counting manually.

The method can still be used but because of the inherent guessometry is not very accurate. The polar planimeter will get the area five times as fast, accurately limning the nuances of all curves.

It was the invention of this device by Amster in 1854 that made yacht designing a lot easier.

Jakob Amster was born November 16, 1823, at Staden Bie Brugge, Switzerland. His first interest was theology which he studied under Franz Neumann at Koenigsburg, but in 1848 he moved to Geneva, then to Zurich as Professor of Mathematics and Physical Science when only 25 years of age.

In 1851 he married the daughter of a prosperous Zurich druggist, M. Laffon, who was himself a scientist and had the means to be a patron of scientific discovery.

Amster's genius at mathematics perceived that the radians of polar coordinates, which is a discipline of analytical geometry, were susceptible to mensuration by a rolling wheel of definite relation in circumference to a fixed polar point.

Amster's invention was simple and accurate and could be manufactured and sold profitably for a price engineering people were willing to pay. It was a tremendous labor saver.

Jakob Amster started producing his polar planimeter in 1856 in a works known as System Amster. He had sold 50,000 machines by the time of his death, prospering hardly. He made Simpson easy to work with.

#### Leaning Causes

Why does a round-bilged hull list outward on a turn while a V-bottom leans inboard on turns?

Here you have to define the kind of round-bilge hull and her speed, and the kind of V-hull and her speed. But above factors being equal, the phenomenon of the difference in handling usually persists.

Let us take the case of a fast narrow boat of each type. In such an illustration we get the greatest demonstrable difference.

Both boats are 25-milers. Both are 25' long, 6' beam. Engines are identical, same propellers, no skegs.

Throw the wheel hard to port on the V-bottom and she heels inboard on the turn and doesn't slow down very quickly. Eventually, as the turn tightens, she'll slow down and if the throttle is closed she then will heel outboard, assuming at very low speed the same turning attitude of the round-bilge.

Take the round-bilged, flat hull and throw her into a tight portside turn. For a short space she'll try to bank but all of a sudden she'll list heavily to the outboard side with such vehemence that a prudent skipper will pull the throttle back, slowing her more and accentuating the heeling tendency.

The reason is found in this fact. As each boat is thrown into a turn the momentum force tends to keep them going in a straight line but the rudder produces a turn, the centrifugal resultant of which is a skid.

When skidding, the V plane on the starboard side of the V-bottom presents a lifting force lifting the starboard side up as the skid and turn progress. At the same time the skid leaves a hollow under the port side, or at least enough water in motion to have no buoyant resultant, and the boat banks.

There is no banking force inherent in the shape of the round-bilge hull. On the outboard side of the turn the water rolls up the topside a bit but there is no uplifting force. Centrifugal force alone, acting through the relatively high center of gravity, produces a rolling moment in the hull to the outside of the turn.

Of course, once down off any planing action, both boats behave alike. Ornery!

A while back we mentioned metacentric height, otherwise known as GM to designers. Bill Garden tells me his rule of thumb for a comfortable, medium-size vessel is a metacentric height of 2.5'. And Bill is about the best source going!

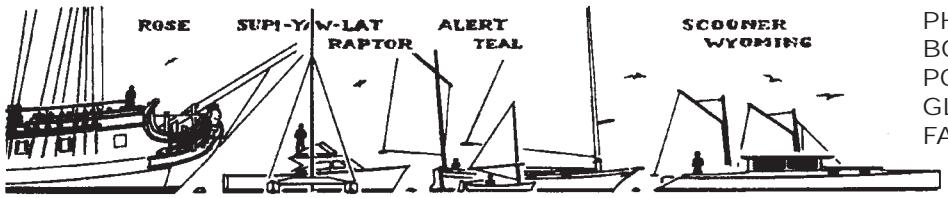
#### Low-Tension Spark

This past winter while pondering the marvels of solid state ignition and the Piezo crystals that spark out a lightning bolt when merely tickled by a cam, I inadvertently put my hand on an old 1908 copy of *Power Boating*, which was going strong in that era.

In this old magazine I perceived the working drawings, or rather the drawings of the workings, of a 1908 four-cylinder, four-cycle Buffalo marine engine. Modern, ultra, up-to-date job for 1908! (See Fig 6.)

The singular thing about this four-cylinder marvel was the low-tension ignition system, igniters in each cylinder head, make-and-break, operated by an overhead camshaft!

All buffs of old engines gather ye and marvel! Obviously the highest speed at which this engine could roll was set by the speed with which the igniter springs could close the points. At that, there was probably time for the necessary two strokes of each piston. Wasn't this engine a daisy?



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### Working Waterfronts at Risk

Admittedly this sequence of installments/chapters is a bit under-organized. It was never meant to be a manuscript for a book, more like quick but not-so-short dispatches of serious developments from the working waterfront of one of America's oldest fishing ports.

### Intricate Regulatory Process

As civilians we observe an impressive level of activities locally and regionally on this multi-faceted challenge of the sustainability of the resource, the commercial fleet and the shoreside communities. There is a lot of specialization in the associated sciences and lots of specialization in all other players in this arena. The national, regional, and local regulators are guided by science and a certain amount of politics, both from federal and state priorities, and importantly from the regional councils. The regional Fisheries Management Councils present a colorful display of respective interests with appointees from the regulators, the industry, state and regional scientists, and recreational fishing interests, meeting and sub-meeting multiple times every season, times multiples more throughout the year.

Local, state, and regional industry associations, be it smaller ones such as the Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association or those with regional reach from New Jersey to the Canadian Border Down East such as the Northeast Seafood Coalition, for instance, introduce their opinions and at times craft very specific policy options. And this process has been going on for decades with the more recent growth in political and legal power of environmental watchdog groups sharpening the rhetoric and at times focus.

### Problematic Track Record & Promise

The outcome, the fruits of mid-to-high-level scientific, administrative, and political efforts, many no doubt also often heartfelt in their personal immediacy, presents the public with the reality of a very mixed bag, although in the early years of the 21st century, with few players looking especially impressive:

1. Resource status shows some extinct outright, others continuing to decline, some holding their own at middling levels of viability but limited accessibility by the fleet, and some species recovering, well into sustainable profitability.

2. Progressively restrictive fishing allowances per species and area for the commercial and to some extent recreational fisheries.

3. As a consequence, the commercial fishing fleet is shrinking/consolidating way down from historic but clearly unsustainable levels of prosperity based on unprecedented catch capability per vessel and overall fleet size which together produced successive declines across a multitude of species.

4. This, in turn, results in the dramatic diminution of the working waterfront's viability of, for instance, the Northeast's Atlan-

## Bolger on Design

### Messing About in Fishing Boats

#### Chapter 7

tic shoreline, and our home town Gloucester in particular, with increasing pressure to re-zone the shoreline of Gloucester's oldest fully zoned and permitted industrial park away from the clearly defined commercial marine/industrial character of the Inner Harbor sector downtown, towards development of hotels, condo row, restaurants, gaming parlors, etc; i.e., non-marine/industrial uses.

Non-value-adding income redistribution schemes are favored progressively such as residentialization of industrial tracts and, of course, tourism assuming reliably perpetual availability for infusion into local pockets of money made elsewhere. There is serious reason to bank on the re-emerging viability of commercial fisheries, including their value as tourist attractions, as enough of the resource is recovering to suggest plausibility of the stock recovery policies crafted by the regulatory process. Apart from scientific blind spots and inevitable regulatory inconsistencies, the biggest wild cards are the even less effectively regulatable environmental pressures ranging from local impact from development to global climate change issues. So there is a ways to go yet.

But there will always be commercial fishing. And it must and will be at lower than historic levels as the new baseline must be sustainability of the resource and thus the fleet and its ports and not "get 'em while you can" get-rich-quick attitudes...

#### The Durable Economics of Sustainability

Farming every aspect of animal protein production has not proven to be either an economic panacea nor an environmentally well-controlled approach and it is certainly not a guarantee of uniformly healthy food. We have a well-developed palate for seafood supported by an industrial infrastructure on shore that allows sharing in the delights and nutritional value of sustainable fishing. And since the waters between the shoreline and Continental Shelf are the natural habitat for perfectly delectable creatures, someone will always have to go and locally get that unadulterated wild animal protein available sustainably beginning at times just beyond the breakwater.

Steaming distances to productive fishing grounds matter. The fishing industry is basically in the transportation business, hauling fishing gear, fuel, and ice out and bringing back fish on ice. Gill netters, long liners,

and lobstermen leave their gear out overnight while driggers carry it around all the time. Therefore, the closer you are with your home base to the fishing grounds, the more viable the fresh fish operations will be in an age of accelerating fuel cost.

Therefore, a minimum smattering of home ports along the shores of productive waters are necessary, from holes-in-the-wall to more extensive clusters of operations in Gloucester, all the way to giants such as New Bedford, Massachusetts (#1 in US catch value), or Dutch Harbor, Alaska (#1 in US catch quantity). The growing importance of low carbon footprint operational principles to sustainably operate fishing vessels are obvious and within immediate reach and do depend in good part upon reasonable distances to fishing grounds.

Fishermen are beginning to re-assess their economics from engine size to fishing practices. Some are still embracing short, fat deep and heavy hull geometries (!) for carrying capacity and stable ride based on perpetual hopes of returning to the days of old when big boats made big money. But more and more are realizing the economic liabilities straight into the poorhouse of high operational cost in times of limited allowable catch, not to mention living with lumpy hulls that fall into the same hole twice, with blunt bows icing up more readily in winter, all the while costing increasingly mad fuel bills year round. A 44'x20' craft can weigh 55,000lbs empty and needs 400hp to just do hull speed of 8.5kts. Compare that to the philosophy expressed in our proposals so far, particularly the concept for 30K220/70D in Chapter 5.

Several serious fishing folks up and down these parts have even mentioned recently the once on the working waterfront unspeakable four-letter word "sail." Mind you, not for the romance of spontaneously breaking out into spasms of ye olde sea shanties in the shadow of clipper bowed replicas of yesteryear, but as a matter of hard nose economics of using favorable winds to favor reduced fuel burn. If 10-25% of the running cost working to a reasonably tight daily schedule could be harvested from wind, some fishermen are increasingly interested in exploring the fine arts and plausible promises of motor sailers, de facto hybrid propulsion afloat. The fact that the visuals to such geometries will not necessarily come to match historic precedents as a matter of daily utility, high labor cost, and safety concerns for the crew are understood. And while we're at it, let's get some federal tax incentive as many of the road going Prius™ captains did...

### Working Waterfronts at Risk

The durable economics and long term overall port community benefits of sustainability-based fisheries has not yet reached the attention of most pillars of the community in ailing ports. They have yet to do their homework on the future of a sustainable port economy that floats all boats in more ways

than one. They do not yet grasp that a certain amount of dedicated working water frontage is vital to do commercial fishing. With a reasonably predictable time delay the Chamber of Commerce meters continue to show downward trends in the port districts of respective fishing communities. Their metrics have not yet adjusted their baseline expectation to the new realities.

Sugarplum fairies of past economic gains from First Fisheries Paradigm proceedings continue to dance over the executive desks. Recollecting that sweetness, the memory of that fat “take ‘em while yer can” needle in the arms pumping good feelings makes them look now for equally quick satisfaction of respective urges. So they are pushing harder than ever for non-marine/industrial zoning of current working port frontage with the idea of retooling the working waterfront into all out “get ‘em while yer can” tourism.

Or they propose to purge the heart of town of unwanted attributes of a “dirty failed past,” be it industrial buildings, the noises and smells, along with associated working folks in well established trades, all to be thrown out in favor of de facto economically gated communities with a water view.

Certain amounts of shrinkage of working waterfront square footage is part and parcel of changing economics as fewer vessels in the recent past could take more with respective support services clustering in fewer state shore locations, leaving a good number of holes-in-the-wall to refocus their economic attention on other uses. But the redevelopment pressure on the working waterfront is pervasive and indiscriminate, as addictive as any tempting, however half-baked, under examined gospel of quickly resolutions of serious long term economic realities. The attraction here is the well worn “out with the old, in with the new” reflex. And it is about as sensible as “throwing the baby out with the bathwater”.

Even the most obvious economic assessments of what minimum services are necessary to retain a viable working port are maniacally wiped off the table in favor of yet another self destructive episode of “get ‘em while yer can” get rich quick attitudes, first an un-self-controlled fishery working itself into oblivion and now the same approach again, just in different garb. Dismissed are the facts that most fishing ports are where they are for usually sensible reasons such as reasonably protected harbors in more or less close proximity to fertile fishing grounds combined with established transportation connections to the markets. These folks are no statesmen and their children’s children will not love them for their impulse-driven, hedonistic, self-serving decisions that will cost in perpetuity. Unlike fish stocks out there, ruined working waterfronts do indeed not rebuild themselves by simply not abusing them anymore.

In the Northeast, Connecticut has apparently lost the most of its working waterfront to this non-marine/industrial development. And even the seemingly endless shoreline of several thousand miles of Maine sees its fishing related water frontage shrink every year to perhaps a few dozen miles total these days.

Massachusetts and Maine are not seeing any noteworthy increase in population. Rather, the shoreline is eaten up mostly by second/third/fourth homes with at best seasonal use and very limited, if any, roots in the local communities. There is an associated pressure to turn working holes-in-the-wall ports into progressively resortized zones of presumed prettiness,

waterfront “authenticity,” the convenient marina or four with the typically old-growth community demeaning Main Street mix of knickknack stores and name brand fast food joints next to enclaves of style and good taste between boutiques of advanced attire and the well-defined mix of self-styled gourmet eateries from casual to starched.

All this is straight out of the standard “buzzards circling” toolbox of nickel and dimeing into a de facto homogenized salty image package of any given old growth community weakened by the decline of the resource and its fisheries, often fully supported by local leaders in an under examined fit of desperation downtown revival policy. These are the real world harsh consequences of the comfortably entrenched and ritualized process of fisheries regulation that went from decades of hands-off under-regulation to recently accelerated draconian restrictions forced by watchdog groups’ lawsuits. There is little to argue here about the state of the resource, the genesis of regulatory policies, and the resulting socio-economic realities alongshore.

Mind you, instead of leaving a crumbling town altogether driven away by economic privations, it is better to milk the tourist for a season or two, assuming the money will cover the rest of the year’s expenses. And not every seasonal job is a bad one. Indeed, many holes-in-the-wall had periodic histories of serious economic and social desperation and some were perpetually poor over many generations. So redeveloping the waterfront seems a desirable turn for the better.

### The Costs of Harbor Redevelopment

But there are several serious problems with this approach if it becomes a standard/reflexive response to this historically speaking rather temporary, since largely man-made and thus correctable, decline in marine/industrial/fisheries related commercial activities:

1. Many tourist service industry jobs will not necessarily support the typical family economics that are usually at the heart of a sustainable social community. For instance, a lot of Cape Cod’s tourism reality is said to have a substantial underground economy of illegal aliens manning the kitchens and hidden support infrastructure vital to the experience of the out-of-towners as locals who do not directly own a profitable stake in this local economy are unwilling to accept low paying, high output working conditions and either carve out other means of support or just leave.

2. A new social stratification will follow from this now vital flow of out-of-towners’ de facto feeding and their interests de facto running the local community, a bad season or any widely reported local mishap will immediately endanger the annual income basis. The limited job opportunities in this increasingly monocultural development model will typically limit the economic future of the locals, with the next generation either accepting its pre-determined lot or heading on their way out of town.

The division within the community between those who have, or hope to have, a viable stake in the tourist/seasonal/condominium economy and those in supporting roles will get harsher as this economic model is more or less a zero sum game between limited premium properties driving self-protective/self-enhancing community zoning/ordinances, etc., likely rigidifying the pool of

economic opportunities. Beyond the tourism business district, how many tourism correct opportunities will there be once the desirable mix of restaurants, inns, theaters, galleries, museums, souvenir shops, amusement parks, and tourists sports ventures have already been divvied up amongst those well-heeled enough to politically and legally push the permanent “devitalization” of those weakened and yet strategically vital properties any working waterfront needs to sustain itself?

3. Re-zoning of working water frontage will permanently take away prime marine/industrial real estate that cannot be duplicated in any industrial park buried deep in the woods out of town next to the dump and near, but out of sight of, the new golf course. Boat building and repair/maintenance with its associated year round and steady work load and nearby support infrastructure such as hardware vendors or just lunch break diners can be moved away from the waterfront only up the maximum roadable vessel size or weight. Ice house, fish auction, and cutters must be right there on the water along with unfettered access by support services such as mechanics, etc. Working piers to load nets, traps, fuel, and crews and to unload catch must remain where they’ve typically been for good, well time-tested reasons. Etc, etc. As respective studies strongly suggest, once these properties are re-zoned they usually are lost for good to the working waterfront ventures and their necessary infrastructure of supporting services.

3a. Once re-zoned to highest bidders only residential status they then will be reduced permanently to non-value-adding premium water view passive status, effectively limiting the economic value to the community of that location to that of the annual real estate bill along with a few sporadic maintenance joblets per year. This type of rezoning thus displaces economic activities and de facto impoverishes subsequent generations as that real estate will never allow value adding to that piece of land once part of the working waterfront. And this economic dead zone will propagate beyond said given property as noise, traffic, people movements and types that are inevitable and vital to working waterfront enterprises will be reduced if not outlawed by respective ordinances. The displacement of jobs, jobs potential, and thus the exile of a good chunk of the population will be legally prescribed for good.

3b. Once re-zoned to tourism/commercial status, much the same will happen as the absolute dependence of the community upon tourists will not allow any degree of self-made extension of economic prospects beyond those allowed by the maximum available tourist feeder artery flow capacity in and out of town, downtown parking lot area, number of hotel berths, and, of course, inherent desirability as a destination. Of course, in quite a few locations along the coast leading locals see little wrong with their particular mix of these theoretical restraints as they pride themselves into managing/planning these local economics to their maximum desirable mix of socio-economic pathologies in return for a presumably perpetual plateau of personal profitability. Their town becomes quite literally their town, with the reasonably predictable probability of decadence inherent in dynastic notions of leadership. Historically few company towns or local plutocracies have proven to be viable and flexible enough to prosper beyond the second generation.

## Who Wants to Visit an Ersatz-Port?

If more and more hole-in-the-wall harbors re-zone from fishing to tourism their plain increase in numbers directly reduces their likelihood to ever stand out as any particularly intriguing destination in which to spend money. An authentic working port with its year round atmosphere of smells, noise, grime, unchoreographable mix of characters, its ho-hum parts of town, constant and unstaged vessel movements, odd/alien industries, ugly associated buildings, and sober, self-confident, no-nonsense going about its business attitude is a very different place to visit than any painfully crafted and tortuously maintained historic semblance of its former self with a few stage set boats and crews to loiter conspicuously, always smiling according to the tourism board book of standards. There is nothing wrong with celebrating the past. But if your shoreside town is just a vanilla flavored, homogenized assembly of backwards oriented tourism correct establishments with no viability now or in the future beyond tourism, how soon will this grey in grey inauthenticity cease to attract the profitiable visitors? Not to mention the blinding beigeness of yet another marina complex in which you cannot readily find your indistinguishable cruiser/racer.

### A Tourism/High Carbon Footprint Centric Economic Model in 2007?

In an age of the quadrupling of energy cost over six to seven years (\$83 per barrel of oil in late September '07) while net income of much of the public has barely kept up with inflation, how much of any given community's future do we want to bank on a business model that depends entirely on that public's capability and willingness to spend more and more of their income on just the cost of traveling to see their destination? The destination town's appeal will not increase with the rise in fuel bills to be paid by would-be patrons.

The same holds true for the owners of third and fourth homes way out of metropolis as their initial idea of just zipping up the coast for the weekend will become increasingly odious in its inherent cost and will be subject to increasing social scrutiny by family and friends as to the personal carbon footprint throughout one's life style. Even if money is no object, will they feel socially or philosophically comfortable in an age of global warming to casually do 600 miles just to sit on a balcony listening to the seagulls even if that sort of travel did not require its own R&R.

And for the locals, it would initially seem profitable to sell/develop prime property for prime money. But it is decidedly undesirable to first lose that property for good for any marine/industrial use to then see decline of overall property values through empty homes offered quietly for sale at a serious loss. To whom?

### Again, Fishing-Fleet's Steaming Times from Few Remaining Ports?

Consolidating the fleet into a very few ports many hundreds of miles from each other is obviously closer to the engineered planned economy fits that have plagued hundreds of millions of people through the last century than to the obvious carbon footprint sensitive considerations advanced in our perspective. Some shorelines may well support such high concentration out of unique geographic and demographic features. But others, such as New England's, suggests a very much more

dispersed localized model of economics. Rail is a much more economical way of swiftly moving perishables such as iced but unfrozen fresh fish to a discerning market, running at speed, without traffic jams, right through most snowstorms, at cost per mile that is unbeatable at that speed and moved weight. Many holes-in-the-wall are not far from some rail connection requiring, at most, modest trucking from the fish pier to the nearest siding. And some see under utilized tracks rusting right through town. The hard carbon footprint numbers matter in any economic activity, not some musty re-developmental pamphleteering out of the halls of leadership that in full public view does not mind to be seen cycling grotesquely between the bipolarities of the "fishing is dead, long live tourism" blissfully pretending that the new policies of economic promise are anything else than the repackaged recycling of past myopic get rich quick reflexes that have already proven to be spectacularly self-destructive.

### Some Conclusions

This full frontal lecture reflects the comprehensiveness of our concerns that drove us into "Messing About in Fishing Boats." To put it bluntly:

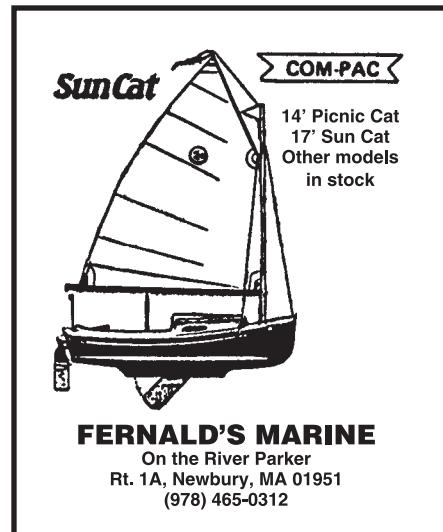
If we can dramatically reduce the carbon footprint of the local fishing fleet to match the catch limitations imposed by sustainable fishing practices in an age of accelerating energy costs, we should be able to seriously enhance the economic, social, and philosophical viability of our community.

Carbon footprint sensitivity is the new unelected, uncrowned, unarguable measurement standard with which to assess local, regional, and national economies.

Persistent carbon footprint intensity underlying any venture will, with few exceptions, become the most plausible indicator of likely limited viability. For select economic activities global movement may indeed remain the best approach. For growing numbers of enterprises though, production and trading of goods, heavy, bulky, or perishables within much smaller geographic zones will prove to be the more viable approach. The marketplace will evolve to deal with the unavoidable carbon footprint challenge. At this point the US consumer appears to still favor the Southeast Asian farm-raised shrimp over the decidedly unadulterated wild northern native shrimp, alongshore processing capacity for which had been dismantled over the years. In terms of transportation effort alone one could readily count on native shrimp to be the better bet soon, quite apart from their cleaner birth waters in the northwest Atlantic.

We'll take another break from reporting on this ongoing crusade in which we have invested much unpaid time, thought, and effort, in the December 1 issue for a rather special feature and return in the December 15 issue to wrap up our arguments. This will feature, without further commentary, three dense pieces in one page handout/petition format we wrote to reflect these concerns. They are circulating locally:

1. A local political appeal to protect the viability of the port from the pressure to re-zone over 70% of it.
2. A statement expressing the local fishermen's perspective on certain realities they are coping with.
3. A request for public statements by environmental non-governmental organizations on our project. Things are moving...



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19-LB TO 29-LB MODELS



The Revolution ready to launch, drive is inserted after the boat is afloat in water of depth sufficient to allow the drive fins to protrude below the bottom their full length.

In my "Commentary" in the October 15 issue I mentioned a small boat dealer acquaintance borrowing my Seda Tango sea kayak for an adventure paddling across Massachusetts Bay. At the time he mentioned to me that he had taken on the Hobie line of small boats. Recalling that Hobie offered a line of sit-on-top kayaks powered by a unique flapping fins system driven by leg powered pedals I asked if he had any of those models in stock. He did, and loaned me a demo of the 13'5" Mirage Revolution for a tryout. I pedaled it on two outings with Charlie, forsaking my usual 13'8" Old Town, both times on flatwater lakes without any significant wind.

I have long fancied trying out pedal power, thinking to use my relatively well developed leg muscles from 14 years of bicycling but opportunity didn't come along and I wasn't going to buy one to find out if I liked this method of human powered propulsion afloat. Did I like it? Yes, with only one caveat: The 13' length limited the ultimate speed potential that I felt I could achieve. Now I'm not a speed maniac afloat, but to me speed potential converts directly into distance traveled per outing for energy expended. When this kayak reached its hull speed pedaling began to feel like I was now trying to go up a steepening hill, there was just no more speed to be realized despite my energy supply still not being fully utilized. There is an easy fix for this, Hobie has a 16' model, the Mirage Adventure.

Rudder folded. Unique pivot allows blade to lay flush to deck when folded.



## Pedal Power Hobie Mirage Revolution

By Bob Hicks

Setting aside this speed limitation, the Revolution was a very enjoyable craft. At about walking speed (3mph) it is effortless, smooth steady progress with hardly any effort at all, my pedaling cadence about the same as my walking stride. This has to be its charm for those who use this model for fishing. Just pedal along casually with rod at ready. It's a very stable platform with its sort of flat bottom (it has a sort of shallow tri-hull configuration) and 28.5" beam, and has a lot of carry space behind the pedaler for gear and fish. Steering is precise using a short tiller (about 6" long) on the left gunwale. The sit-on-top design is unsinkable and re-entry should one dump is straightforward along the rear deck.

The unique propulsion fins resemble seal fins. The entire propulsion unit is a drop-in, into an open well ahead of the seat. With the two foot pedals oriented fore and aft and side by side at their travel midpoint, the two flippers are aligned straight up and down and drop right through the well where they are locked into place with two cams easily locked by hand. As the pedals move forward and back, the flippers move from side to side. As each

Rudder half unfolded.



flipper reverses direction the draft of its flexible "sail" trailing its leading edge "mast", flops over on the new "tack. Ingenious. Acceleration is brisk right up to hull speed.

The fore and aft pedaling motion is not like the circular motion of a bicycle. It has a more abrupt change in velocity when changing direction. The recumbent seating with the seat back/pad clipped into place in the molded-in seat pan in the upper deck permits developing full power from each leg as it straightens on the power stroke. The pedal hub is adjustable for leg length permitting full extension of the leg to develop full power. My 32" inseam required a setting right out at "6" of 7 settings. Yet my 4'10" 90lb niece who tried the boat also could set the pedals for maximum power.

A minor irritation for me was the banging of the fins on the hull at full pedal extension when they come up flush to the underbody. To resolve this I aligned my feet in the pedals so my heels would hit the forward floor of the unit prior to the fins hitting the hull beneath. Perhaps a finer adjustment of the leg length positioning would eliminate this. Alternatively a soft rubber block bonded to the forward floor of the well, which would stop the feet before the fins hit the bottom, would work.

The fins fold up tight to the hull if one gets into really shallow water, but of course one loses propulsive power in such a situation and the spare double paddle carried

Rudder down.



along in a paddle park alongside the cockpit gunwale must be resorted to. The fins extend about 10" down below the hull at their maximum extension and thus can get entangled in underwater plants, or stick in the mud, or even strike rocks if one is unwary. The fins are flexible and mounted so that several encounters I had with shallow conditions did no harm once I extricated myself with my paddle. The propulsion unit cannot be lifted out in such a situation with water too shallow for full extension, they must be straight up and down to do so.

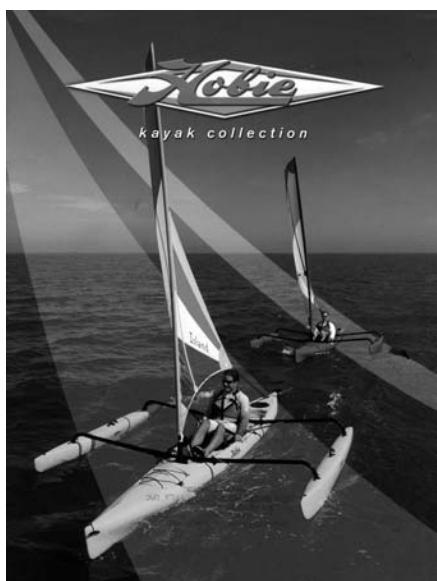
As I ride a recumbent bicycle I was completely at home in the recumbent position with pedals ahead of me, rather than beneath me. With the full back support from the snap-in seat cushion/pad I could thrust against the pedals with the full strength of my leg muscles (like those sliding seat rowers do!) and really feel the power go to work accelerating the kayak. Loafing along at walking speed the weight of my bent leg alone dropping as my knees straightened as the pedal was pushed away was sufficient to keep the boat moving.

Well, I'm intrigued enough to arrange to try out the 16' Adventurer model, and it has an additional option that is just about irresistible. A complete trimaran sailing rig mounts right on the 16' hull. I was offered that one to try initially but decided to first try just the pedal powered version. One thing at a time for me to master. If this happens while we still have some fine fall weather in October as I write this I'll let you know my reactions to that setup. Imagine, pedalsailing!

Many thanks for the loan of his demo for this report to Joel Thomas of New England Small Craft, Inc. 295 Newburyport Turnpike, Rowley, MA 01969, (978) 948-6119.

Hobie Mirage Revolution Specs
Rotomolded Polyethylene Sit-on-Top
Length 13'5"
Width 28.5"
Drive Weight 6.6lbs
Hull Weight 58lbs
Capacity 350lbs

And for my next act... (from catalog cover)



Adjusting for leg length before inserting drive unit into cockpit well.



Fins fully down shown here before rotating 90° to drop into slot in hull.



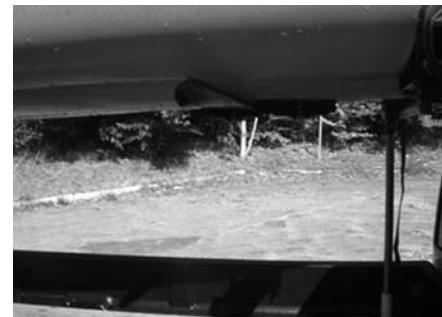
Fins fully up, obviously they cannot be installed when in this position.



Drive unit dropped into place, note cam knobs that must be turned through 180° to lock unit in place.



View underneath of fins fully extended.



View underneath showing fins fully retracted against the hull.



## COMPASS ROSE REVIEW

**“Views and Reviews from the Coast of Maine”**

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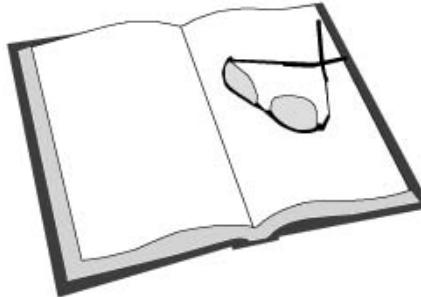
[www.compassrosereview.blogspot.com](http://www.compassrosereview.blogspot.com)

When author Bob Simpson reminisces about the good old days on the North Carolina coast, he is talking about some pretty distant days indeed since this book was actually first published in 1983. Almost a quarter century later the changes he saw happening at that time look minuscule compared to what we've seen since.

*When the Water Smokes* is a beautiful book and Simpson's flowery prose approaches poetry at times. It's a narrative of the changes brought on over the course of a single year, month by month, as the seasons roll by and the imagery is laid on thick and heavy by the author, a professional journalist and documentarian.

Interwoven in that narrative is the story of Simpson's acquisition of the *Sylvia II*, a story that begins with Chapter 1, "The Great Ground Hog Day Storm." That storm brought misfortune to a number of area boats and the *Sylvia II* was one of them. She was an elderly wooden "party fishing" boat, locally built, 30-odd feet, inboard engine, with a small cabin forward, a windshield, and a partial hard-top to shield the party from the sun. When the storm holed and sank her in her slip her equally elderly captain/owner allowed Simpson to take on his problem for \$200. Simpson brought her back from the dead and she reappears as a character throughout the remainder of the book as he and his wife run her up and down the Atlantic coast.

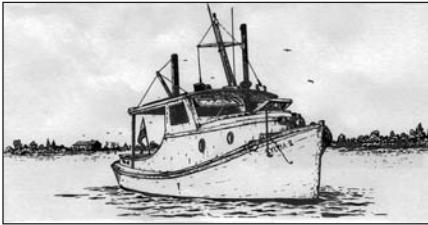
At times the book takes on the character of a nature study, delving into the sights and signs of the changing seasons in minute detail. The title comes from the chapter of the same name which starts, "During



## Book Review

### *When the Water Smokes* A Peltier Creek Chronicle

By Bob Simpson  
Reviewed by Preston Larus



the transition of autumn into winter, when warm sea water meets cold air, the result is steam. It may be in fog, but more likely windswept 'smoke.'"

It is also a reminiscence of people and times on the waterfront, stories that are disappearing into the mists of time. The days when a working Joe could afford to live in a waterfront house or shack are just about gone now that the dirt under them commands a price that attracts the developers to build for maximum density. In that sense I found the book at times brought on a melancholy mood of paradise lost. Only the rich man can afford the waterfront now and look how poorly he uses it!

If the book is two stories, one about the transitions of countryside and one about the travels of the boat, I would have enjoyed more detail about the boat and less about the countryside. Being a messer, I suppose, means that I want to know more about how she was built and whether I could, say, build a replica using the stitch-and-glue method! But I suppose that's what the Internet is for, a quick Google search turned up a good story about her origins at <http://www.newsobserver.com/803/story/186918.html>, written by none other than Bob Simpson! Meanwhile, *When the Water Smokes* is art and literature, in addition to simply messing about.

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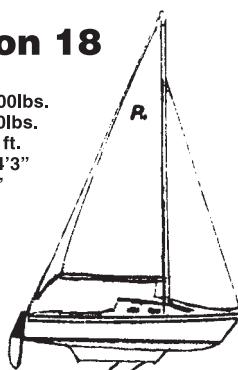
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# When Should You Junk a Boat

By Boyd Mefferd

It's been clean-up week here at the boatyard. Those of you who have been here know that a week, even of concerted effort, isn't going to make much of a dent. Probably I should designate "clean-up year" and get the job done, but there are boats to restore and bills to send out and my grandmother told me that "every little bit helps."

I took a break and read Hugh Groth's good article in the September 15 issue on "When Should You Build A Boat?" and thought that I might borrow his title and modify it ever so slightly. Hugh's answer, to grossly paraphrase him, is that you just know when the time is right for boat building. Boat junking is a little different because there are a lot of good reasons to put it off. Maybe you think you'll have time for the project "someday" or some enthusiastic person (you'll notice that I didn't say "fool") will come out of nowhere and "adopt" it.

They don't make them anymore. An important piece of history will be lost. I know all the reasons. I've sold "project boats" for 26 years. In that time people have shown great courage and ambition and bought some pretty rough boats. Later they've sent photos of the restored boat, as proud of their "baby" as they were of their firstborn. Some boats, however, just never found that devoted person, even when they were offered for free. Usually they were the utility models that have been less desirable but cost just as much to restore as the sleek twin and triple cockpit runabouts.

Over the years we've had good luck storing the rougher boats outdoors under "tents" with high ridge poles and the cheap blue or green tarps that come from China or Korea. If they are changed every couple of years the snow slides right off and the boat can be kept with only minor yearly deterioration, hanging in there looking for Mr. or Ms. right. At some point, however, the number of boats exceeds the money and energy available to maintain this holding pattern and I begin to ask myself if I really need to cover this one?

The next phase for the uncovered boat is for small trees to start to grow in the bilge. When the trees reach 6'-8" their roots are into rotten chines, keel, and stringers and there isn't enough strength left for the boat to be picked up. I just gave away a boat with 3' trees to someone who promised to restore her. She stayed together when picked up but it was in the nick of time.

At a boat show this summer someone introduced himself and said that he'd heard that I ran a junkyard for old runabouts. A horrified customer overheard this and told him that not all our boats were junk and some, in fact, were quite nice. I added that while we did have a number of project boats available, we were not a junkyard to the extent that we sold specific parts or hardware off the boats. Boats were available as complete as I could make them. If someone wants to buy one for the express purpose of robbing parts, I can't stop him once he owns it but please do not tell me that in advance. We've been pretty high and mighty about the preserving history bit, and for the most part it's worked out. Most of the hulls that went into the dumpster this week came to us with their major parts



already removed years ago. I was thinking that maybe the day would come when someone would want that particular boat so badly that he would buy reproduction hardware and take on the project. Unfortunately the trees got to 6'-8" before that day came.

It's hard to fool Bob Hicks and years ago he wrote about my place as a "graveyard for runabouts," the place the elephants came to die. I've done my best to prove him wrong but in the end I've had to play undertaker for a few every couple years. Years ago a customer told me that being an undertaker was a very good business but there wasn't much glamour to it. ("I'm not really a funeral director, I just play one on TV"). Saving a warped out, sagging boat feels a lot better than junking one.

Devoted wooden boat enthusiasts often like to pretend that wood does not degrade with time. The Antique and Classic Boat Society is now under leadership which designates boats to be judged as "preserved" with mostly original wood or "restored" with newer, stronger wood. To me it seems like a self-defeating proposition with the "preserved" boats becoming fewer and fewer over time, eventually becoming too frail to be used, if they aren't already. People like to think that just because it's intact, it's strong.

I remember one man who was having a 1925 boat restored by another shop which had very little information on the deck layout. We had a sister here and he came up to measure and photograph. The man was about my age and maybe he just wanted to impress me with his physical agility. He jumped up on the 80-year-old decks and was literally scampering around when I told him to stop for fear of his falling through. Just because there are decks doesn't mean you should walk on them! I wanted my decks intact to copy and him safely back in his car without injury.

Some people like keeping things and others prefer the uncluttered life, even if it means going out and buying a replacement for something they recently threw out. Some of us keep the leftovers until they mold and stop to pick up things by the side of the road. We like to think of ourselves as recyclers, not pack rats. I don't know if "one of us" can harmoniously live under the same roof with "one of them." Fortunately I haven't had to find out. I do know that the old adage that "as soon as you throw something away you'll

need it" is true for me more often than not. So it's hard to justify junking boats, even when the handwriting has been on the wall for years.

Often the boats go from being merchandise to free and, if no takers, then gone. Giving away boats is not an easy job and sometimes the people who are interested only in free ones are more demanding than those prepared to pay. If you run one of those "free boat free ad" things in *WoodenBoat*, be prepared to get calls at all hours of the day and night.

I've tried for some time to give away a Hi-Liner outboard that I thought would make a good project. I recently commented that if I got one more call from someone who was upset that the free boat had some rot in her, then it was the end. This week, with the dumpster right out in front, I got that call, so I'm out of the free boat "business," at least for now.

We've had people here looking at boats who see something that is just about ready for varnish and ask "can you really save that one?" Beauty is in the eye of the beholder and I've seen more miraculous restorations of truly gray piles of lumber than I can count. So when is it time to junk a boat? When the trees get to be at least 6' high, I guess. Those of you living in the desert need a different rule, but I'm sure you know what it is.

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On a recent weekend I was working on the boat, putting in a new forward window, when a boat came by running on the trolling motor. It seems that they ran out of gas coming back to Shell Point and were on their way to the launch ramp to pull the boat. Many years ago friends of my father came in off Tampa Bay under oars (which is not easy in an 18' open outboard). They had run out of gas, ran the battery down with the trolling motor, and had to row. At least they had oars of sufficient length and size for the two men on the boat to take turns with the rowing. It was a calm day on the bay but they were two tired individuals.

A friend and I once paddled our family's 16' boat back to shore while my father worked on the outboard motor. It was not easy for two high school-aged boys to move the boat, and if the wind or tide had been against us we would not have moved at all.

The above two recollections may bring a chuckle to some. But in the "old days" (pre-1960 and/or pre-CB) you had to get back as best you could. With luck, someone would come along and tow your boat back to shore. Back when head boats ran out of St Marks on a regular basis you would see a number of boats tied on the back of a head boat as it came back in from a day of fishing. Anyone running short on fuel would motor for the usual return course followed by the head boats and be picked up as a boat went by.

These days there are no head boats going out of St Marks regularly and most people have VHF to call for assistance. Sometimes help comes from another boat nearby and sometimes it is the local towing company who answers the request for assistance. More than once I have heard a call from someone with a problem and an answer from another boat whose operator came to see if they could help. About once a month I see a boat being towed up the canal to the launch ramp at Shell Point by another boat. Over the years I have towed others and been towed back to shore. It is part of being of assistance to others sharing the water.

## From the Lee Rail

By C. Henry Depew

There is a cliche to the effect that if you think you should put a reef in the sail, put in the reef. Even though there is a cost, this concept has been reinforced over the years in our boating. When we had trouble getting in to St Marks due to a generator problem one evening, we did not have a CB radio on board (cost about \$200 in those days). We anchored within sight of the lights of St Marks with no way to communicate our problem to the people who would have come and towed us. The next day I bought a radio/antenna combination and mounted it on the boat the next weekend.

Some years later we were coming back from a trip to Dog Island in our Sisu 22 in less than ideal weather (rain, haze, quartering seas, etc.) using a DR compass course to find the very small entrance into Shell Point (shoals on both sides). After successfully finding the entrance and getting to the dock, I purchased a LORAN-C rig for the boat. Before we sold the Sisu 22 the boat had LORAN-C, CB, and VHF on board, each with its own antenna mounted on the cabin top. The boat looked like a communications/command vessel but I could talk to people and I had some idea of where I was on the bay when the weather closed in.

Our current Sisu 26 has a mounted VHF radio (with an emergency antenna), a handheld VHF radio, and a mounted GPS unit. The "portable" LORAN-C is in storage on the boat as a backup to the GPS. Although the GPS is very nice, the LORAN-C is still much better getting us back to a specific location on the water. Each of the electronics has its own circuit/fuse setup and I have back-up wire with alligator clips to connect directly to one of the batteries if necessary. The back-up VHF is a nice option since the radio can fail for a variety of reasons.

The other day I went for a practice flight in a Cessna 150. The plane's sole radio started acting up on the transmit side (I could receive very clearly). When the tower informed me that they could barely hear the transmission from the plane (at about a mile from the tower), I elected to land and get the radio checked out. If there had been a second radio on the plane, all would have been alright for the moment. Now I know why some of the pilots carry a handheld aircraft frequency radio in their flight bags.

I still have a portable CB rig but it is used mainly as a loudspeaker system on the boat for race committee work. Almost every CB radio came with a "PA" capability. Plug a speaker into the back of the unit and you had a full PA system ready to operate. We took a CB, speaker, and a small motorcycle 12-volt battery to a dog meet one time. The system gave the coordinator a public address system with little trouble in terms of set-up or use. When I see the expensive speaker systems on some boats for on-the-water voice communications, I wonder why not a CB and a portable speaker as it is a lot less expensive, can be stored out of the way when not needed, and does the job quite nicely.

At present, I have finished the disassembly and cleaning of our boat's diesel water separator filter. It came with the boat (1985) and had been disassembled at least twice

since we purchased the boat. When I started this time the Allen bolts that hold the plastic bowl to the aluminum filter housing would not turn. Soaking them with various lubricants released them enough for my Allen bit to allow me to turn them with a ratchet socket wrench. This project was supposed to be an "afternoon" activity at the boat. Using some big pliers and Allen head bits I was able to get everything apart and cleaned. Now I go back to the boat and put it all back together.

Getting the filter back to town involved holding it in something to keep any residue from getting all over the car. To do this I used some paper towels and a plastic bag. The plastic bags used by grocery stores for your purchases are very nice for a variety of uses around a boat. You can store quite a few inside one of the bags and then retrieve one as needed. Along with a fly swatter, plastic bags and a couple of metal coat hangers should be part of your on-boat gear. A metal coat hanger can be bent to allow the retrieval (maybe) of something in the bilge or other inaccessible area, make a temporary cotter pin (you do have a wire cutter on board?), free blocked holes/hoses of debris and the like. Granted, they rust in time and will need to be replaced but a clothes hanger is useful for more than holding up the coat/clothes in the locker.

Another useful item when working on diesel fuel lines, filters, etc., is a couple of the puppy training pads from the pet store in various sizes. The absorbent side holds the liquid and "junk" while the plastic side keeps it all there (so to speak). When finished, fold up the pad and put it into a plastic bag for disposal at the local hazardous materials site. This approach keeps things nice and clean. I also use disposable latex gloves for such jobs. We purchase a box of 100 every so often at the grocery store. Granted they are not as strong and tear resistant as the ones I purchased for heavy machinery work, but they do a nice job of keeping hands clean.

In my article in the October 1 issue there was a problem with a URL (Universal Resource Locator) in the fourth paragraph of the third column of the article on page 30 as well with another in the next to the last paragraph. In the first case, it should have read:

The official National Geodetic Survey access URL is <http://www.ngs.noaa.gov/>, click on...

Also, there are no spaces in a URL address (there may be an under\_score, however). Thus, the URL for the United States Power Squadrons' website noted near the end of next to the last paragraph should read: [http://www.usps.org/localusps/d2/stormking/sgeo.htm...](http://www.usps.org/localusps/d2/stormking/sgeo.htm)

I realize the above is technical in nature, but the web will not find wrong addresses. You get an error message instead.

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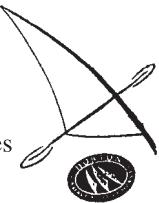
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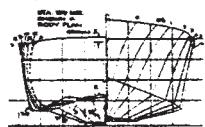
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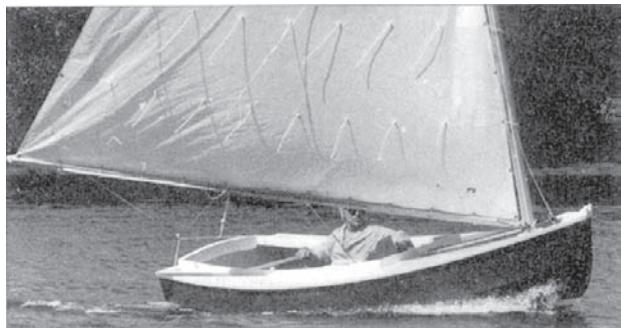
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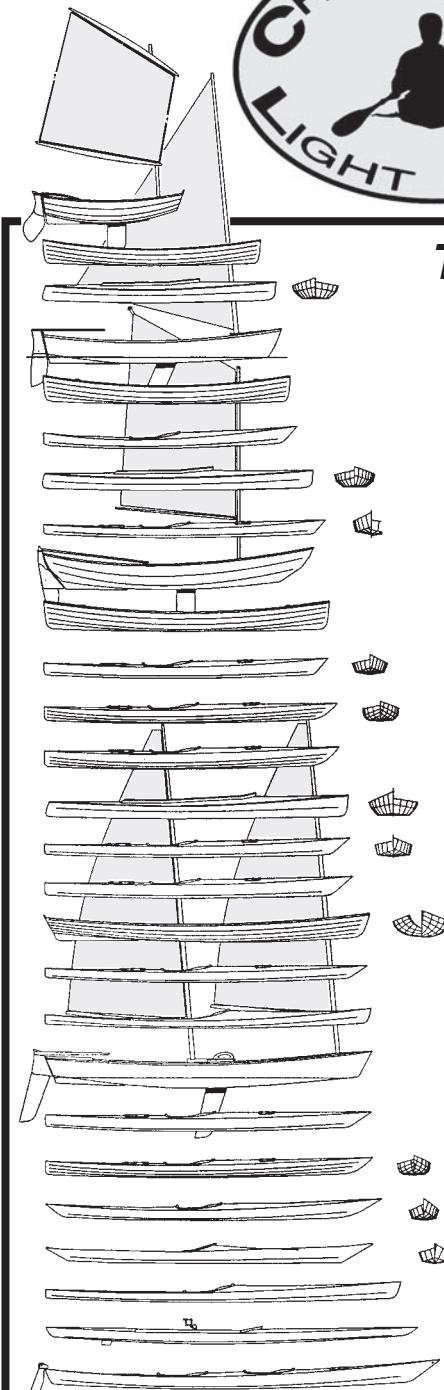
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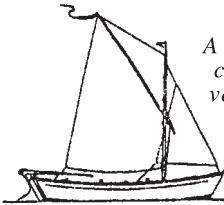
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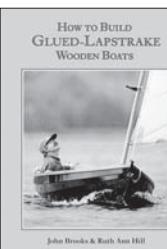


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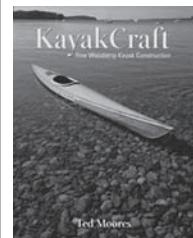


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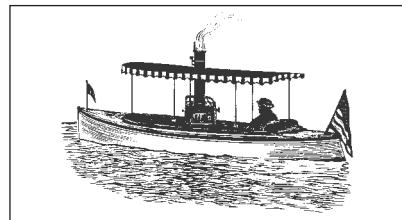
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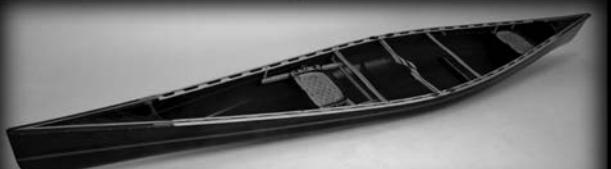
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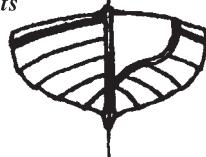
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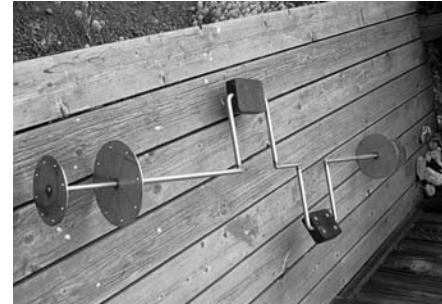
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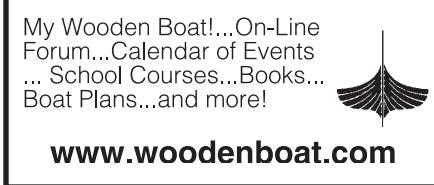


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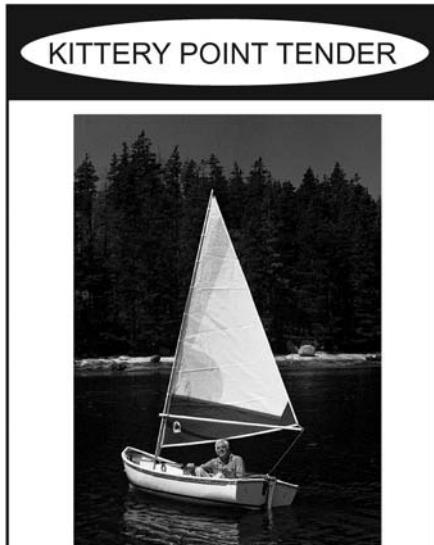


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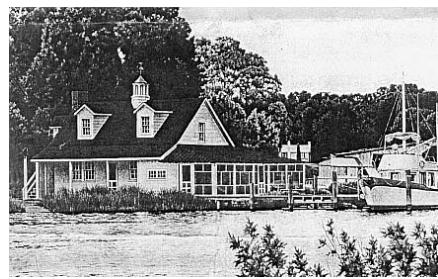
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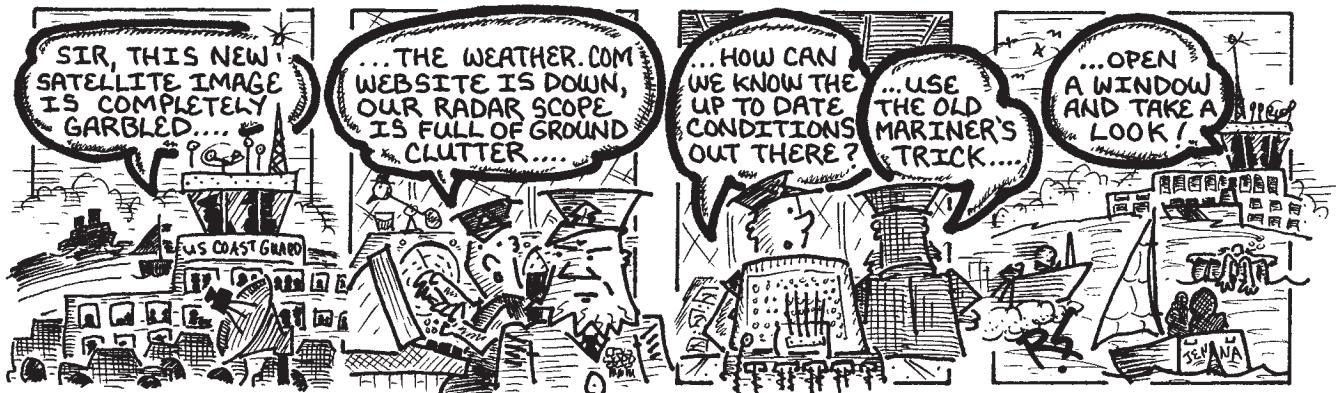
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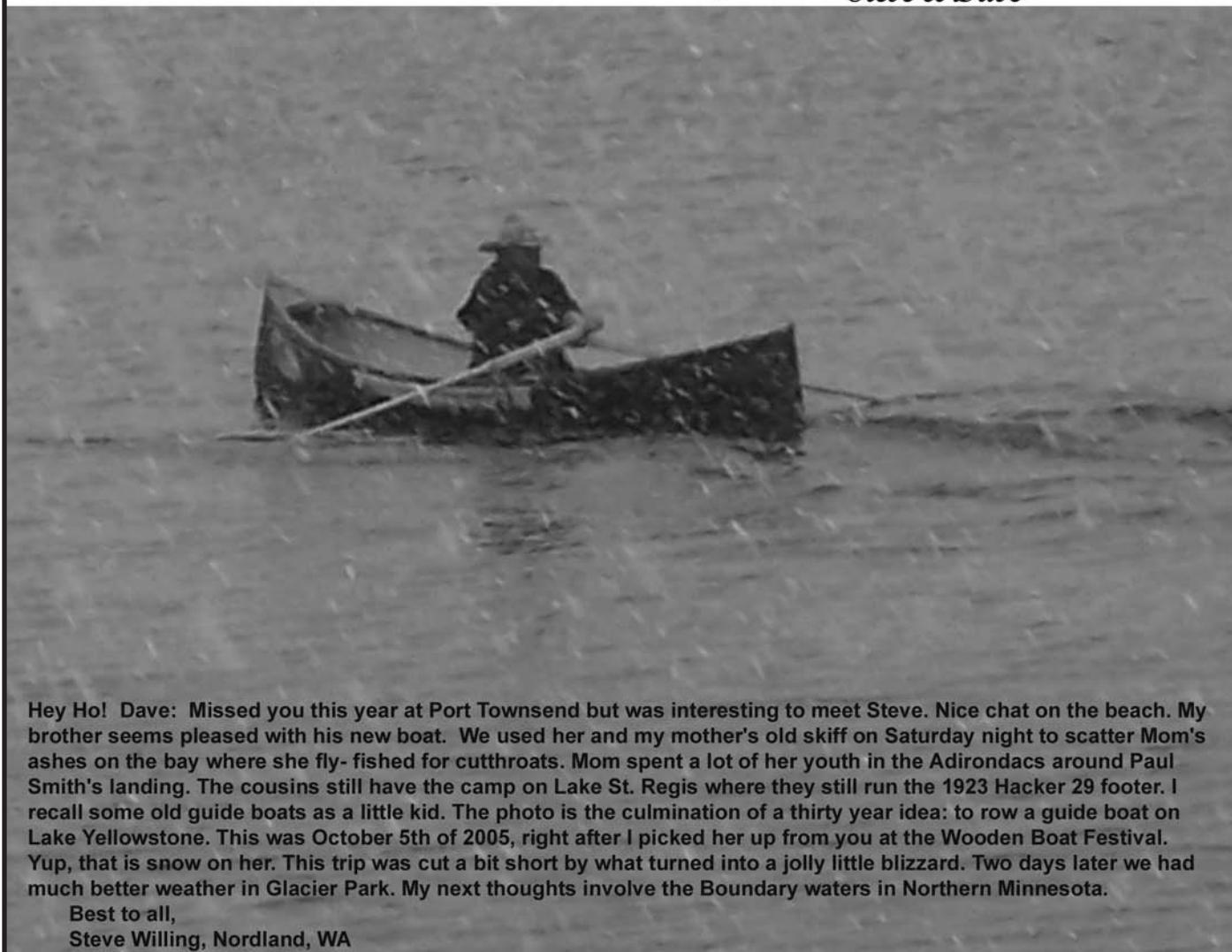




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By the time you read this our shows for 2007 will have been completed. We don't yet have the line up for 2008 but we'll get that buttoned up and posted pretty soon. Folks often assume our slow months are January & February....in fact those months are quite busy. November and December are slow. So...if you buy before the end of the year we'll take 10% off of new boats, 15% off of blem's and demos. You needn't take delivery until the Spring. This doesn't apply to wooden boats or kits.

Best regards to all, *Steve & Dave*



Hey Ho! Dave: Missed you this year at Port Townsend but was interesting to meet Steve. Nice chat on the beach. My brother seems pleased with his new boat. We used her and my mother's old skiff on Saturday night to scatter Mom's ashes on the bay where she fly-fished for cutthroats. Mom spent a lot of her youth in the Adirondacks around Paul Smith's landing. The cousins still have the camp on Lake St. Regis where they still run the 1923 Hacker 29 footer. I recall some old guide boats as a little kid. The photo is the culmination of a thirty year idea: to row a guide boat on Lake Yellowstone. This was October 5th of 2005, right after I picked her up from you at the Wooden Boat Festival. Yup, that is snow on her. This trip was cut a bit short by what turned into a jolly little blizzard. Two days later we had much better weather in Glacier Park. My next thoughts involve the Boundary waters in Northern Minnesota.

Best to all,  
Steve Willing, Nordland, WA

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